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Part XV: Public Relations.

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TELLING THE TRUTH IN PUBLIC RELATIONS: AN APPLICATION OF THE NARRATIVE PARADIGM

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A paper presented to the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the annual conference in Boston, August 10, 1991.

TELLING THE TRUTH IN PUBLIC RELATIONS: AN APPLICATION OF THE NARRATIVE PARADIGM

Abstract

Public relations, as a communication management activity, has a public image problem generated by low public confidence in the capability of spokespersons to tell credible stories. Walter R. Fisher's narrative paradigm is advocated as a conceptual framework and evaluative technique for helping both public relations practitioners and audiences to discriminate truth from nontruth in public communication efforts. Narrative rationality and its constituent elements, narrative probability and narrative fidelity, are explained, and three questions are developed that can be used for assessing public relations stories. The three questions are applied in an analysis of two cases--the videotaped Los Angeles police beating of Rodney King and the poisonings of three residents in Washington state by cyanide laced Sudafed capsules. The case analyses are presented as demonstrations of the narrative paradigm's efficacy in guiding judgments about the acceptability of public relations communication.

An NBC-Wall Street Journal survey conducted during December 1990 about the tensions in the Persian Gulf asked respondents what they thought of Saddam Hussein's move to release foreign hostages. The three response options for the question were "a genuine gesture toward peace," "don't know" and "a public relations ploy" (Brokaw, 1991). Clearly, the attitude of the survey's creators toward public relations was that "PR" is an enterprise roughly synonymous with calculated deception or manipulation. Judging from its routine acceptance in the news report, that negative characterization of public relations was not intended to be viewed as anomalous.

Such anecdotal evidence that public relations has a public image problem is not difficult to find. Even without examining recent "Doonesbury" comic strips, one sees the credibility of public relations regularly questioned in newsmagazines (e.g., Kaplan & Cohn, 1991; McDaniel & Fineman, 1991) and newspaper columns (e.g., Kalish, 1990; Layton, 1991). Indeed, even prominent practitioners have lamented the tarnished reputation of public relations (Budd, 1989, 1990; Seitel, 1990), and PR educators and researchers have recognized the doubtful image of public relations as less than fully effective and credible communication (e.g., Cheney, 1991; Cheney & Frenette, 1990; Judd, 1989).

Among educators, E. W. Brody notes that "vestiges of the 'public be damned' era remained in the closing years of the twentieth century...[and] contributed to public skepticism and cynicism and compounded public relations tasks" (1988, p. 5). Evidence that there might be substantial justification for such public skepticism is apparent in Frank Winston Wylie's (1989) research finding that 35% of university public affairs directors admitted they had released false or intentionally misleading information to the press or other audiences. Alan Raucher sums up the situation dramatically:

> Virtually no serious histories of public relations or biographies of its major practitioners fail to mention its bad reputation. For many people "public relations" has continuted to mean the opposite of truthfulness and genuine substance; a "public relations ploy" stands for the disingenuous and manipulated effort (1990, p. 25).

A problem for public relations, then, is its own reputation as an institutional communication activity that is less than fully truthful.[1] This problem is not just a trivial irritation, though, because the enterprise exists in virtue of its capacity for informing and moving audiences, and that task begins with audience assessments of credibility. It has long been recognized that a key element of source credibility is the perception of truthfulness (Berlo, Lemert & Martz, 1970); as John J. Budd, Jr. describes the dynamic, "what is considered fair and honest reporting sets the agenda for [public relations's] actions" (1990, p. 5).

In a world of competing values and diverse institutional goals, however, how to tell the truth is not always self-evident. In response to these conditions, this paper advocates Walter R. Fisher's "narrative paradigm" as a set of concepts and guiding questions that point the way toward both assisting audiences to assess the truth of public relations accounts and guiding public relations communicators in their truthtelling efforts. I will briefly describe relevant aspects of the narrative paradigm and some of its detractors' criticisms, develop questions derived from the narrative paradigm as guidelines for assessing the acceptability of any communication, and apply those questions in an analysis of the public relations responses in two recent institutional crises.

The Narrative Paradigm

Fisher argues that being human means to make sense of the world through stories. Hence, *homo narrans* is immersed in discourses that only and always are "historically and culturally grounded and shaped by human personality" (1987, p. 49). By stories Fisher does not mean a delimited range of plots or specific dramatic genres; on the contrary, his contention is that human understanding is grounded in a "logic of good reasons" that embraces values which are established and reflected in individuals' own practical experience (1978, 1980). Fisher's focus on storytelling as a fundamental aspect of human understanding has considerable support among theorists in the humanist tradition (Grassi, 1980; MacIntyre, 1981; Ricoeur, 1984, 1985, 1990). The signal contribution of the narrative paradigm, however, is to focus critical attention on the evaluation of stories as grounds for assent.

Narrative rationality.

Fisher foregrounds *narrative rationality*, which contrasts with (but does not contradict) traditional technical rationality. Narrative rationality is a form of consciousness whose orientation is toward ontology, whose critical concern is with character and values--in the sense that the credibility of stories involves assessments of human motives by judging how characters' actions resonate with one's practical knowledge of the world and values--and whose goal is to perceive the true and just (1987, p. 67). Traditional rationality is oriented toward epistemology, has as its critical concerns the adequacy of facts and knowledge and the logical proofs of propositions, and aims to establish an objective reality. Traditional rationality has the logic of Cartesian science and is a discovery procedure that must be learned; narrative rationality has the logic of "good reasons" and is inherent in one's being an experienced human agent.

Failure to understand the narrative paradigm as being both a competing logic with traditional rationality and at the same time a metalogic which subsumes it has resulted in considerable criticism of Fisher's approach (see, eg., McGee & Nelson, 1985; Tompkins, 1988; Warnick, 1987). Warnick

(1987, p.187) demonstrates that certain narratives are "invidiously persuasive precisely because" they appeal to an audience's narrative rationality, either by masking contradictions of objective fact or by exploiting an audience's willingness to fill in the blanks of an ambiguous story. Criticisms of the narrative paradigm on this basis, however, lose their edge when full credit is given to Fisher's notion that even assertions of technical grounds for assent are themselves narratives which audiences can evaluate. Thus Fisher wraps *homo narrans* and technical and narrative rationality together in his argument that "the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making is 'good reasons' which vary in form among communication situations, genres, and media" (1984, p. 7), and he asserts that those good reasons always are supported by prior determinations of fact (1987, pp. 106-113). Only in this sense does he privilege stories as the compost of human understanding. Narrative rationality, then, is built upon technical rationality, and issues involving the nature and use of facts in arguments are addressed in the concept of narrative probability.

Narrative probability and narrative fidelity.

Fisher identifies two aspects to narrative rationality, *narrative probability* and *narrative fidelity*. Narrative probability refers to the qualities of a story by which it is judged to have internal coherence; narrative fidelity addresses the ways stories ring either true or false in virtue of audiences' real world experience.

> Probability, whether a story "hangs together," is assessed in three ways: by its *argumentative* or *structural coherence*; by its *material coherence*, that is by comparing and contrasting stories told in other discourses (a story may be internally consistent, but important facts may be omitted, counterarguments ignored, and relevant issues overlooked); and by characterological coherence [i.e., by whether participants in a story behave reliably in character--see Weal, 1985] (1987, p. 47).

Narrative fidelity is assessed by inquiring into the *values* that underlie communication to see if they resonate with the values of other stories known to be true or accepted as true in an auditor's life. As such, fidelity asks: What are the implicit and explicit values being expressed? Are the values consistent with the decision at hand? What might be the consequences of accepting the values, and are they acceptable to oneself? And, do the values constitute the ideal basis for human conduct in the story situation? (Fisher, 1987, p. 109).

Truthfulness in communication thus is an amalgam of situated fact and value. This is the heart of the narrative paradigm's contribution. It represents not a "privatization of morality" (Condit, 1987) but an unwillingness to rely solely on universalistic criteria in criticism and an acceptance of the real world circumstances in which every communication occurs.

From the principles of narrative probability and narrative fidelity, then, a set of questions can be derived for the assessment of truth in public relations communication. The questions as derived here are applicable for use by both storytellers and auditors, either one of whom might be public relations practitioners or members of their publics. I have collapsed some of Fisher's discussion and categories within both narrative probability and fidelity into broader question types for the sake of ease of presentation and use; however, the basic sense of his approach still applies to the analysis of any instance of human communication (see, especially, Chapters 2 and 5 of Fisher, 1987).

Narrative probability can be assessed by carefully answering, "*Is this story coherent in structure, content, and character?*" In evaluating a story to answer this question affirmatively, an audience or practitioner must be satisfied that the story is not self-contradictory in its fact scenario or argumentative structure (Fisher discusses these elements as aspects of reasoning that form the base components to be "transformed" into the logic of good reasons; I deem them more appropriately accounted for as assessments of coherence in structure and content). Analysts must also be satisfied that the story's purported facts square with what is known about the world, both in terms of other sources of information about the story's core issues and in terms of auditors' real world experience more broadly. Finally, this question implies that stories must present characters whose actions and motives are consistent with what auditors know of similar characters in similar real world circumstances. In this way, intuitive knowledge of historical-cultural-linguistic practices are brought to bear on the question of the story's acceptability.

Narrative fidelity requires an assessment of a story's explicit and implicit values, i.e., its grounding in principles of desireability. The values foregrounded by the narrative paradigm are "values of coherence, truthfulness, wisdom, and humane action, which are necessary for transforming technical logic and empirical knowledge into a force for civilized existence" (Fisher, 1987, p. 48). The tests of values identified by Fisher can be distilled into two central questions. First, the relation of values to the plot of the story is addressed by, "*Are the values expressed in the story appropriate to the fact scenario?*" For example, the story of the My Lai massacre would not be credible if framed as a military action epitomizing patriotism. Implicit in this question are subordinate concerns for the inclusion or omission of relevant values and the distortion of values for the sake of making purported facts more persuasive.

Second, the relation of values to auditors' experience is addressed by asking, "*Are the values in the story confirmed in personal experience as the noblest expression of human motives?*" Here Fisher is concerned not only with the consequences to audiences if the values expressed in stories were indeed adhered to, but also with the issue of moral standards. Fisher relates this concern to the "transcendent issue":

> This is clearly the paramount issue that confronts those responsible for decisions that impinge on the nature, the quality, and the continued existence of human life, especially in such fields as biology and weapons technology and employment. Transcendent values are present even in ordinary cases, but they are rarely matters of dispute. They concern ultimate values and are generally taken for granted by the arguer, but when brought to the surface, they reveal one's most fundamental commitments (1987, p. 109).

These three questions, then, constitute the critical apparatus for practitioners to generate true stories and for audiences to detect the truthfulness of stories. The rest of this paper is devoted to applying this framework to analyses of two public relations efforts, first the response by the Los Angeles Police Department to the videotaped beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers, and second the Burrows-Wellcome Corporation's response to cyanide poisoning deaths associated with their Sudafed medication.

The Police Beating Case[2]

Shortly after midnight on the morning of March 3, 1991, an amateur videographer videotaped Los Angeles police officers pulling the driver from a 1988 Hyundai which had been stopped after a chase on the Foothill Freeway and surface streets. One officer, a sergeant, shot the driver with a Taser gun, and three others repeatedly beat him with nightsticks and kicked him. The beating lasted one minute and 43 seconds; during that time the man offered no observable resistance to the officers. Twenty-one other officers assembled and watched the beating without intervening. Subsequently it was established that Rodney

Glen King, a Black, 25 year old unemployed construction worker who had served time for second-degree robbery, had been severely injured. Struck 53 to 56 times by nightsticks, King suffered 11 skull fractures, including a shattered eye socket and broken sinus bones and cheekbones, and sustained broken ankle and foot bones and facial lacerations that required 20 stitches to close.

The first account of the episode that was issued by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) public affairs office stated that King was speeding at 115 mph during the chase, acted as a threat to the arresting officers as the chase ended, and was in custody and being investigated for evading police officers and evading parole. On March 6, the day the amateur video reached network news broadcasts, Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley issued a statement that called for a tough investigation of the beating and labelled the incident shocking and outrageous. Calls already were coming from citizen groups for the removal of the controversial chief of police, Daryl F. Gates; Bradley did not attack Gates, noting that as a civil service employee Gates was subject to Police Commission and civil service rules. Bradley also noted that the four officers directly involved in the beating had been reassigned to nonfield duties pending completion of investigations by two LAPD units. The next day the FBI initiated an investigation to determine if federal civil rights prosecution should be pursued.

Daryl Gates's own statements, however, formed the core of the LAPD response and constituted the center of the case's controversy. In a March 8 press conference, in a March 14 public hearing with elected officials and citizen advocacy groups, and in numerous press statements from March 6 forward, Gates provided the accounts for how and why the videotaped events occurred and framed the issues for public deliberation. As had been the case in at least three earlier LAPD controversies--the 1979 shooting death of Eulia Love, the failure of LAPD to promote Hispanic officers, and the excessive use of the chokehold by LAPD officers--Gates cast himself in the role of lightning rod by making his own career and personal statements the issues in contention. The possibility of Gates's resignation and the adequacy of a Civil Service Commission case for firing him became issues that were set in tension with the story of the King beating and actions to be taken toward the police officers involved, and those issues thus served to define the story.

What was Gates's story and what is its narrative probability and fidelity? Gates aimed to portray the beating as "an aberration...something that should have never happened" (Tobar & Stolberg, 1991). As such, he attempted to rescue the reputation of the LAPD under his leadership by partitioning this action from the normally honorable behavior of LAPD officers who are well trained and in control (Ferrell, 1991). In addition to insisting the incident was an aberration, Gates further segmented the incident from routine police behavior by pointing out the existence of adequate policy guidelines on arresting suspects (Reinhold, 1991) and by focusing blame on the three officers and one sergeant most directly involved in the beating. On March 8 Gates said he would seek felony charges against the three officers and would discipline the sergeant administratively. All officers were still in a paid duty status, and Gates refused to give names of the personnel involved in the incident. He continued to characterize the case as an aberration, and he repeatedly expressed his determination to stay on as chief, eventually suing the city when the LA Police Commission attempted to suspend him from duty ("LA Police Commission," 1991).

Gates's character was consistent and predictable in terms of motive and action throughout the period. He was protective of LAPD institutionally (see Mydans, 1991), frequently pointed to the 8,300 purportedly uncontaminated officers as evidence that the episode was an aberration, responded combatively and repeatedly to charges that he should resign, and set up a scapegoat--the sergeant--whom Gates alleged was responsible for the incident. His logic was that an arrest after a chase naturally causes officers' adrenaline and emotion to surge, making them vulnerable to commiting violent acts; although trained to manage their responses to the excitement of the chase, officers might need to be restrained by caring fellow officers (" [It's] what they should have done, if they really loved their brother officers...," Gates said). But Gates held that the official responsibility to intercede rested on the sergeant (Ferrell, 1991). Oddly, Gates said he would not seek charges against the sergeant, citing the purported fact that the sergeant had not participated in the beating except to use the Taser gun, which Gates said "was an acceptable departmental procedure" (Reinhold, 1991). Hence the sergeant's noninvolvement both made him the cause of the beating and served as the reason for his not being tried for a crime in connection with the beating.

Gates's typical scapegoats in the earlier controversies were the victims themselves. Thus, for example, he publicly stated that Blacks are more vulnerable to chokeholds than "normal people" ("Bradley: Systems," 1991). In the King case, Gates also implicitly blamed the victim. More than two weeks after the incident and under strong public pressure, Gates issued his sole public apology to King by saying, "In spite of the fact that he's on parole and a convicted robber, I'd be glad to apologize" (Kramer, 1991).

The sergeant issue is only one of many inconsistencies of fact and structure that plague Gates's story and bear on its narrative probability. For example, among the bits of cultural information that most US consumers possess is the certainty that a pre-1990 Hyundai auto is incapable of 115 mph. Indeed, when the audiorecordings of the police radio communications were made public it was obvious that in the chase even the police vehicles never exceeded 65 mph ("Man beaten," 1991). Gates attempted to mitigate the officers' violent behavior by claiming that King himself "created" the incident by speeding and evading arrest and by giving the police reason to believe he was under the influence of PCP. Yet four days after the incident King was released from jail following a district attorney finding that the city lacked evidence to prosecute him. Though of a more circumstantial and impressionistic nature, a contradiction lurks in Gates's insistence that the attack was not racially motivated while it is clear that all four officers who beat King are white, as are all 21 of the other officers who stood by and watched the beating.

Similarly, the treatment of the beating as an aberration is questionable in light of the record of citizen complaints. Nearly 10,000 claims of police misconduct have been filed in Los Angeles during Gates's tenure as chief, 127 complaints have been filed with the Police Misconduct Lawyer Referral Service in the first two months of 1991, and in 1990 alone Los Angeles paid out over $8 million in damage settlements from police misconduct (Lewis, 1991; Watson, 1991).

Gates's story also loses its ring of truthfulness in the area of values. His strategy of placing himself--his career and his opinions and reasons--at center stage deploys the value issues as situated in his own discourse. Mayor Bradley characterized the beating as "shocking" and "something we cannot and will not tolerate" (Mydans, 1991); President Bush also called it shocking, and said the scenes on the video were "terrible" and "gratuituous violence and brutality" (reported on the "MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour" March 28, 1991). Yet Gates described the beating as "an aberration," as if the important trait and consequence were its deviance from routine; upon being pressed by questioners at his March 8 news conference, Gates conceded only that the incident could be described as "excessive force" (Reinhold, 1991); and at the same news conference he said the beating was "a great disappointment, tremendous disappointment ...that never should have happened" (Ferrell, 1991). To satisfy values of wisdom and humane action, the facts of the beating demand instead a response of revulsion and regret and a determination to carry out systemic corrective measures; it calls for more than mere disappointment.

The fact scenario also requires of spokespersons a heightened sensitivity to publics' social and political views, especially those publics most affected by similar or related incidents. In this case, leaders of civil rights, religious and community groups had long been focused on LAPD's treatment of minorities and had agitated for improvements in the training and supervision of line officers. Yet Gates defensively insisted that the problem was not with the department's routine practices and policies, and he even shielded the department against threatened federal investigations, using an unfortunate choice of words: "This department can withstand any investigation and we welcome any investigation. We're proud of what we have done" (Lewis, 1991; Stevenson, 1991).

The Sudafed Deaths Case

On February 15, 1991, local officials in Washington state notified the Seattle US Food and Drug Administration office that Jennifer Meling of Tumwater had become seriously ill on February 2 from cyanide poisoning after taking a Sudafed capsule. The deaths of Kathleen Daneker of Tacoma on February 11 and Stanley McWhorter of nearby Lacey on February 18 were reported to the FDA on March 1; both those deaths also were attributed to cyanide poisoning, and both victims had Sudafed in their bodies at the time they died. In the weeks that followed, investigators turned up three more Sudafed packages that showed signs of tampering, but none resulted in harm to consumers.

The manufacturer of Sudafed, Burroughs Wellcome Company (BW), received notification of the latter two deaths on Saturday, March 2, and immediately initiated a nationwide recall of all 12-hour Sudafed capsules. A team of BW packaging specialists was dispatched from the corporate headquarters in Research Triangle Park, N.C., to assist FDA and Washington state Department of Health officials in their investigation of the poisonings. Law enforcement officials coordinated their efforts with health investigators and began to trace the source of the tainted medication. BW also immediately established a toll-free telephone line for responding to questions from customers and retailers and publicized the 1-800 number in major newspapers and radio and television spots (see Hilts, 1991). Within a week of the recall B-W chief executive officer and president Philip R. Tracy appeared on national television advertisements describing the poisonings, expressing sympathy and condolences for the families of the victims, and informing viewers of efforts to find the source of the tampering. Tracy also noted the firm's commitment to safety and high quality products and announced the toll-free telephone service.

Because of previous national experience during the 1980s with cold medication tamperings involving Tylenol and Excedrin (see Center & Jackson, 1990, pp. 166-173), the Sudafed tampering was not controversial when the story first became public. A hint of controversy, however, emerged when the Washington state Department of Health initiated an investigation into the "long time lag" between the poisonings and the notifications to the FDA (Cimons, 1991). A more serious challenge to the routine handling of the incident came when McWhorter's widow filed a wrongful death suit against BW, alleging that the Sudafed packaging "invites tampering" because it is a "flimsy box-type packaging" and that capsules should not be marketed because firms know they are susceptible to tampering (Taylor, 1991). The McWhorter's attorney, Paul Whelan, also said that BW should have "alerted the medical community in Thurston County [where Stanley McWhorter had lived] and recalling locally the product from the shelves"; the suit contends that Sudafed should have been recalled on February 5, when BW was notified of the Meling poisoning (Taylor, 1991, p. B2).

BW spokeswoman Kathy Bartlett responded with the BW story. Sudafed is a $109 million per year product line, 15% of which is sold in capsule form; therefore, a decision to recall Sudafed must be undertaken with great caution and accurate information (Cimons, 1991). After receiving notice of Meling's illness, BW sought information from Tumwater police investigating the poisoning and were told it "appeared to be an isolated case...[,]that there was no evidence of tampering, and they were treating it as a criminal investigation," Bartlett said (Taylor, 1991, B1). In addition, BW offered to analyze the remaining Tumwater capsules and found no cyanide in any of them. Nor did they find evidence of cyanide in any Sudafed packages returned from the store where Meling purchased hers. Immediately upon being notified of the two deaths, however, BW sent 235,000 letters to physicians and 245,000 recall notices to retailers and ceased shipping and manufacturing Sudafed capsules.

Bartlett also addressed the packaging allegation by noting that capsule safety still is not regulated by government agencies but depends on manufacturers' compliance with voluntary industry guidelines. Those guidelines require two tamper-resisting features on each product; Sudafed has been designed with three such features, Bartlett reported, a gelatin band on the capsule, a sealed foil blister pack, and a tamper-indicating strip on the container (Taylor, 1991).

The BW story is cohesive in terms of the firm's actions in response to information it received from the police and FDA officials: When there was no evidence of tampering, BW assisted in investigations to further rule out tampering; and as soon as tampering became evident, the firm acted decisively and responsibly according to lessons learned in previous product tampering cases. No internal conflicts of fact or reasoning are evident in the BW story; moreover, the character of its central actors--Spokespersons Bartlett and Karen Collins (Taylor, 1991) and CEO Tracy--engenders trust because it reveals consistent and reliable motives in the firm's actions and statements. Evidence of this reliability and conformance with publics' expectations about motive and action lies in the appearance of news coverage that focuses on the criminal investigation techniques instead of on the product liability issues (e.g., Brown, 1991).

The test of narrative fidelity asks first if the fact scenario and expressed values are consistent. While product tampering cases are occurring with alarming frequency and consumers might be at risk of growing insensitive to their horror, cases such as the Sudafed poisonings are nonetheless terrifying events. The BW story treated the incidents as extraordinarily hazardous events and responded with massive efforts to counteract them. The case also has a tragic element in the loss of lives and the suffering of victims' families, and the firm acknowledged the tragedy and pathos in each of their public statements. Collins, for example, said of BW, "we truly share in the community's sorrow over this tragic event" (Taylor, 1991, p. B2), and Tracy called the events "a tragedy" and said, "our sympathies go to the families of the individuals involved" (Cimons, 1991, p. A1). The values exhibited in the firm's acknowledgment of victims' suffering resonate with feelings of publics and the values that make the story newsworthy in the first place. More important, perhaps, is the overarching value of acting deliberately and fully to protect public health ahead of avoiding any narrowly construed financial risk to the firm.

Discussion

It is evident from assessing these two cases that narrative probability and narrative fidelity are mutually dependent, each informing the other. Judgments of character coherence require determinations of motive; to say anything about the quality of a motive requires the insertion of values--the grounding in principles of desireability--into the argument. Similarly, to answer questions of value requires that the plot, argument structure, action, and characters of the story be understood. Value and character of any actual story in real space and time cannot be assessed without context--the historical, cultural, and situational details of lived experience.

By applying the narrative paradigm to public relations stories, truth and values converge, and stories' truthfulness is validated in individuals' personal and communal experience. The two stories evaluated here demonstrate divergent sets of narrative probability and fidelity, and the analysis accounts for the vastly different receptions each story received from its audiences. In the LAPD beating case, the values of loyalty and pride do not resonate with the experience of the storytellers' relevant publics, and they need to give way to more urgent needs for reconciliation, genuine service and compassion for members of those publics. More specifically, the fundamental strategies expressed in Gates's story--the strategies of trivializing harm, of seeking personal exculpation, of intransigence and scapegoating--embody values that do not resonate positively in the lives of his audience. The proof is evident in the massive public outrage by what was shown in Holliday's videotape.

In contrast, Burroughs Wellcome's sensitivity to its publics' need for safety is given form in its actions to minimize harm while fully informing publics about the firm's role, procedures and plans. Their statements of sympathy for victims and their forthrightness in calling the incidents tragic indicate a sensitivity to the values of humaneness and compassion. Perhaps most relevant to the test of narrative fidelity, the cynical value of corporate self-interest fostered by maintaining a public image of safety and noncontroversial dependability gave way to the transcendent values of protecting consumers' health and right to be accurately and fully informed.

Footnotes

1. By "truth" and "truthfulness" I refer to the commonsense notion of the terms and not to any technical logic or philosophical definitions. Thus, to be truthful is to say what is known to be factual, genuine or sincere; and to be untruthful is to misrepresent fact or motive or to withhold available relevant information. Truth therefore is inseparable from issues of communicators' judgments about adequacy of accounts.

2. The videotape shot by George Holliday was shown repeatedly for two weeks after the incident on all the major network news broadcasts, including the "MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour" on PBS, which devoted a special segment to the story on March 28, 1991.

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TEACHING FUND RAISING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS: A NATIONAL STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Fund Raising in Pubic Relations Programs: A National Study of the Attitudes and Behaviors of Educators

Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
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Little research has been conducted to determine the extent to which fund raising is taught in public relations programs or to measure the attitudes and behaviors of educators toward teaching PR students about fund raising. A national study reveals that nine ASJMC schools offer fund-raising courses and that although 73% of the educators agree that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, only 68% and 44%, respectively, agree that it should be taught as part of PR courses on fundamentals or techniques.

Teaching Fund Raising in Pubic Relations Programs: A National Study of the Attitudes and Behaviors of Educators

A recent analysis of the communication and public relations literature revealed that fund raising is a topic that has received little attention from those who teach and study in these fields (Kelly, 1989). Illustrating this absence, a review of *Journalism Abstracts* up to 1990 shows that little graduate work in communication has been done on fund raising, even though the Supreme Court has defined fund raising as a constitutionally protected form of free speech (Village of Schaumburg, 1980). The 1989 edition of *Journalism Abstracts* (Fowler, 1989), for example, includes 374 abstracts of dissertations and theses accepted for graduate degrees in journalism and mass communication from July 1, 1987 to August 31, 1988. Of these theses, only a study of volunteer blood donors is indexed under the term *fund raising.* In other words, fund raising is protected under the First Amendment because it involves the "communication of information, the dissemination and propagation of views and ideas, and the advocacy of causes" (Village of Schaumburg, 1980), yet fund raising has not been perceived as a viable subject of study for graduate students in communication.

In his review of public relations research from 1975 to 1985, Pavlik (1987) made no mention of studies dealing with fund raising, and, in fact, the term *fund raising* is not mentioned once in the entire book. An earlier survey of public relations research by Grunig and Hickson (1976) also did not cite any studies on fund raising.

The Body of Knowledge Task Force of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Research Committee (1988) confirmed the absence of fund raising as a viable research topic, but also provided an important theoretical link for incorporating fund raising within the teaching and study of public relations. Organized under six major headings, the task force's report consisted of more than 750 citations, of which only 9, or slightly more than 1 percent, can be identified as publications about fund raising. Yet the Body of Knowledge Task Force clearly intended that fund raising should be defined as a component of public relations when it incorporated the subheading, "Fund-Raising," as the seventh element and function of the professional practice of public relations, along with media relations, community relations, financial and investor relations, internal relations, public affairs, and marketing, marketing support, and consumer relations.

The "newness" of defining fund raising as a function, or specialization, of public relations is revealed by the fact that only 6 citations were identified by the task force for the fund-raising subheading, whereas internal relations was assigned 29 citations.

Specialization or Separate Function

The confusion over fund raising's relationship to public relations is best exemplified by authors Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985), who provided two very different viewpoints in their leading textbook, *Effective Public Relations*. In chapter 1, "Introduction to Contemporary Public Relations," the authors defined fund raising as a part of public relations. They stated, "Fund-raising and membership drives occur within the context of an overall program designed to influence an organization's relationships with various publics; therefore they are part of the larger organizational function—public relations" (p. 16).

Yet in chapter 21 on public relations practice in voluntary agencies, Cutlip et al. (1985) reversed themselves, stating, "It is the public relations task to provide a favorable climate for the fund raiser, usually a specialist. The two functions must work in close cooperation, but as a general rule it is best not to combine the functions, whether in a university or in the Alliance for the Arts" (pp. 519-520). In support of their argument, the authors provided an excerpt of a 1983 letter from a practitioner with expertise in nonprofit public relations, who stated:

> As with advertising, the goals and objectives of fund raising are too often in conflict with the goals and objectives of public relations to make a good marriage. The heavy selling aspect of both advertising and fund raising has a major impact on the credibility and accountability of a nonprofit organization's communications. Public relations activity should not be compromised by involving it too deeply in the hard sell. (p. 520)

These conflicting viewpoints in the same text probably can be attributed to the 1985 addition of Glen Broom as one of the authors of *Effective Public Relations* and Scott Cutlip's long-held perspective of fund raising as a function close to, but separate from, public relations. In his book, *Fund raising in the United States*, Cutlip (1965/1990) identified organization and communication as the two separate elements important to fund raising, but said that public relations' role is traditionally one of communication, whereas fund raising is concerned primarily with organizing or managing programs. He stated, "Today fund raising and public relations, in terms of business organization, are distinctly separate professions, though the two functions are inextricably intertwined in the art of raising money" (p. 178). This perspective is strongly represented in the second half of the 1985 edition of *Effective Public Relations*.

Broom, it can be speculated, contributed heavily to the beginning chapters of the 1985 edition and holds a newer and different perspective. In the opening pages of the text, public relations is defined as "the *management* function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends" (p. 4, italics added). Firmly rooted in systems theory, this conceptual definition allowed Cutlip et al. (1985) to refer to fund raising in the beginning of the book as "donor relations," grouping it with staff functions such as consumer and government relations that deal with an organization's relationships with specific publics while still being part of the larger public relations function.

Both conflicting perspectives are represented in other leading public relations textbooks (Kelly, in preparation). For example, Newsom, Scott and Turk (1989) stated in their text, "The functions of PR and development are separate, but the two groups must work closely together" (p. 15). On the other hand, Grunig and Hunt (1984) treated fund raising as a specialized program of public relations, although they described it as often being "the most mindless of PR programs" (p. 356).

Given the absence of fund raising as a viable topic in the study of communication and public relations, and the confusion over its relationship in leading public relations textbooks, it is not surprising that little is known about the extent to which fund raising currently is taught in programs of public relations or about the attitudes and behaviors of educators toward teaching this topic. Yet fund raising is a growing occupation that public relations graduates may find attractive. As textbook authors Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1989) stated, "The demand for experienced fund-raisers has created a shortage among those qualified, and salaries in some instances have skyrocketed to $100,000 or more annually, accompanied by elaborate fringe-benefit packages" (p. 484).

More important than career opportunities, fund raising—or its euphemism, development—is a critical function for nonprofit organizations classified by the Internal Revenue Service as "charitable." As such, it has significant impact on the practice of public relations for those organizations. Cutlip et al. (1985) said that a strong thread running through all charitable organizations is fund raising, which "tends to dominate the [public relations] practice in these areas" (p. 550). In their textbook, Baskin and Aronoff (1988) stated, "Fund-raising is a common problem shared by all these organizations and often becomes a priority of public relations practice" (p. 355).

The Study

In order to determine the extent to which fund raising currently is taught in public relations programs and to measure the attitudes and behaviors of educators toward teaching public relations students about fund raising, a questionnaire was designed and sent in December 1990 to 112 faculty members. The population of interest was public relations programs at colleges and universities. The population actually studied was educators at those schools and departments affiliated with the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC) that had declared a public relations sequence for inclusion in the 1990 edition of *Journalism & Mass Communication Directory* (Coleman, McGill & Williams, 1990). It is important to note that the population, as defined for actual study, excluded educators teaching public relations in academic units other than journalism and mass communication, most notably those in departments of speech communication. The population also was limited to those academic units that reported a sequence utilizing the term *public relations*, thereby excluding institutions that reported major sequences or program specialties in narrower areas such as *corporate public relations*. Finally, although all degree-granting senior colleges and universities with courses organized under journalism or mass communications are invited to submit data on their programs for inclusion in the annual directory, listings of faculty are printed only for those schools and departments affiliated with ASJMC (Coleman et al., 1990, p. 3). As discussed shortly, such listings were critical for identifying individual faculty members who were assumed to be the most knowledgeable about public relations education, although this dependence excluded educators in non-ASJMC programs.

Historically, the study and teaching of public relations grew out of the academic area of mass communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). For the purpose of this study, therefore, it was logical to examine public relations programs within the structural context of schools and departments of journalism and mass communication, resulting in the population parameters just described. However, it was assumed that the validity of the findings would be enhanced if, whenever possible, data on teaching fund raising were provided by faculty members with identifiable linkages to public relations (i.e., there was an assumption that public relations educators differ from their colleagues in news-editorial or other mass communication specialties on the subject of fund raising).

Therefore, the population for this study was first selected by identifying those schools and departments in the *Journalism & Mass*

Communication Directory (Coleman et al., 1990) that had a declared public relations sequence and a listing of faculty names. One individual per institution was then selected, based—in descending order—on his or her identification as: (1) chair, head, or coordinator of the public relations sequence; (2) a faculty member who was a member of PRSA; or (3) dean, director, or chair of the school or department. Membership in PRSA was determined by cross-referencing faculty names listed in the *Journalism & Mass Communication Directory* with the geographical listing of members in the *1990-91 PRSA Register* (PRSA, 1990). In the case of multiple PRSA members, preference was given to full-time, tenure-track faculty at the highest academic rank.

This two-part selection process resulted in a population of 112 educators. As stated earlier, the questionnaire was sent to these educators in December 1990, along with a personalized cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a self-addressed, stamped, return envelope. As of February 1, 1991, 79 completed questionnaires had been returned, for a response rate of 71 percent. The respondents consisted of 16 heads of public relations sequences, 35 faculty members who belonged to PRSA, 19 deans, directors, and chairs who were not PRSA members, and 9 substitute respondents who were not PRSA members, were adjunct faculty, or could not be classified.

Results

The questionnaire primarily consisted of two parts. The first part was designed to determine the extent to which fund raising currently is taught in public relations programs (i.e., the teaching behavior of educators as it relates to the topic of fund raising). The second part of the questionnaire measured cognitions and attitudes about fund raising.

As given in Table 1, separate courses on fund raising currently are offered by nine ASJMC institutions that have declared sequences in public relations. These institutions represent only 12 percent of the educators who answered the question on offering fund-raising courses for academic credit. None of the nine institutions offer more than one separate course on fund raising, although six of the nine offer that one course almost every other semester. The institutions are divided on offering the fund-raising course primarily for undergraduates (4), for graduate students (3), or for both undergraduate and graduate students (2).

Table 1
Institutions Currently Offering
A Fund-Raising Course

Institution	Course Title	Students	Faculty
Brigham Young University	"Fund Raising"	Undergrad	Part Time
Eastern Kentucky University	"Fundraising"	Undergrad	Full Time
Ohio State University	"Role of PR in Fundraising"	Both	Full Time
San Jose State University	"Fund Raising"	Undergrad	Part Time
Shippensburg University	"Fund Raising and Association PR"*	Grad	Team
University of Florida	"Special Topic: Fund Raising"	Grad	Full Time
University of So. Carolina	"Topics: Fundraising"**	Both	Full Time
University of Toledo	"Seminar in Fund Raising"	Undergrad	Part Time
West Virginia University	"Journalism 312"***	Grad	Part Time

*Plan is to split into two separate courses
**One-credit, five-week course
***Course offered by parent journalism school, not PR

At four of the institutions, the fund-raising course generally is taught by full-time, tenure-track faculty members, whereas part-time, non-tenured faculty teach the course at four of the other institutions. Shippensburg

University reported that its course, "Fund Raising and Association PR," is team taught by a full-time and a part-time faculty member.

The texts reportedly used to teach these courses reveal the need for textbooks on fund raising. Only three of the nine institutional representatives named a specific book currently used by instructors, whereas four reported using no text, or using reprints and readings in place of a textbook. All three of the specific books named were written by fund-raising practitioners (e.g., Broce, 1986, and Seymour, 1966), and none were written for the primary purpose of teaching undergraduate and/or graduate students.

Related to this deficiency of fund-raising textbooks, only 3 of the 79 educators (4%) responding to the survey agreed with the statement that current PR textbooks do a good job of covering fund raising; 54 (68%) somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement. In other words, slightly more than two-thirds of the educators in ASJMC institutions that have declared public relations sequences believe that current public relations textbooks do *not* do a good job of covering fund raising.

In addition to the nine institutions currently offering a fund-raising course, two other institutional representatives indicated that their public relations programs are planning to offer a least one course on fund raising within the next three years, and four others said that their programs would like to offer a fund-raising course, but lack the teaching expertise. Although these 15 institutions represent only 20 percent of those educators responding to this part of the questionnaire, the study provides strong evidence that fund raising is, indeed, a component of public relations education today. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (71%) reported that although their public relations programs do not offer a separate course on fund raising, their programs incorporate fund-raising concepts in other public relations courses.

Only seven educators reported that their public relations programs are not interested in offering courses on fund raising, and of those seven, three were deans, directors, or chairs who were not members of PRSA (i.e., they were drawn from the third category in the selection process, consisting of heads of academic units that have declared sequences in public relations but no identifiable faculty members with a link to public relations). One dean of a school of journalism in the Midwest, for example, reported that his public relations program is not interested in offering fund-raising courses and added a hand-written comment that he has no informed opinions on the issue of teaching fund raising "because we don't teach formal courses in PR."

The remaining four respondents who reported no interest in offering fund-raising courses were a part-time instructor, two faculty members accredited by PRSA, and one department chair who was a PRSA member.

Finally, the size of the public relations program appears to be a necessary, but not sufficient condition for teaching separate courses on fund raising. Although the majority of the programs represented in the study (43) enroll between 101 and 299 undergraduate and graduate students, nine institutional representatives reported having 300 or more students majoring in public relations, and of those nine institutions, four offer a separate course on fund raising.

Excluding the University of West Virginia, at which the fund-raising course is offered by the parent journalism school, all of the public relations programs offering separate fund-raising courses have six to nine public relations courses listed in their college catalogs, as opposed to the median of three to five courses. No surprisingly, all have at least three or more full-time, tenure-track faculty members teaching public relations, although the majority of the programs in the study (44) have two or fewer full-time faculty. Two of the eight programs with separate fund-raising courses reported having six to nine faculty members: the University of Florida and the University of South Carolina.

As discussed earlier, the practice of public relations for nonprofit, charitable organizations is greatly affected by the fund-raising function. Although no reliable statistics exist, it generally is acknowledged that a significant number of public relations graduates embark upon their careers at nonprofit organizations, most of which are 501(c)(3) charitable organizations that are dependent to some degree on fund raising. As Wilcox et al. (1989) stated, "Many practitioners, including recent graduates, hold jobs in organizations of this type" (p. 471).

According to the educators in this study on teaching fund raising in public relations programs, a median of about 25 percent of all public relations students, nationally, go to work for nonprofit organizations—as opposed to corporations, PR agencies, and government. Broken down, 47 percent, or almost half, of the institutions represented in the study reported that one-third or more of their public relations students go to work for nonprofit organizations. Educators at 22 institutions, or 29 percent, reported that half or more of their students take jobs at nonprofit organizations after graduation. This latter group defies any apparent geographical explanation as it includes institutions such as the University of Maryland, the University of Georgia, Southern Connecticut University, Drake

University in Iowa, Ball State University in Indiana, the University of Oklahoma, and Humboldt State University in California.

It would appear from these findings that somewhat of a gap exists between what is taught in public relations programs and the career placement of public relations students. Of those 22 public relations programs from which half or more of the graduates go to work for nonprofit organizations—where, it has been pointed out, fund raising usually is a top priority for public relations practitioners—only 2 currently offer a course on fund raising: Shippensburg University and the University of South Carolina. Two additional programs plan to offer a course, or would like to, but lack the teaching expertise. In other words, 82 percent of these programs depend solely on incorporating fund-raising concepts in other public relations courses to prepare 50 percent or more of their students for nonprofit jobs that likely will be affected by fund raising.

Focusing on the concept of fund raising as a public relations specialization, as advanced by Kelly (1990), 58 of the ASJMC educators, or 73 percent, strongly or somewhat agreed that fund raising is a specialization of public relations. In comparison, a noticeably higher proportion, 88 percent, agreed that investor relations is a specialization of public relations.

A second indicator was used to measure the opinions of educators about the relationship between fund raising and public relations. Participants in the study were asked if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, are neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement, "Fund raising is a closely related, but separate function from public relations." This statement reflects the opinion held by some leading public relations educators, such as Cutlip (1965/1990), as discussed earlier in this paper. Whereas 73 percent of the respondents agreed that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, 44, or 55 percent, somewhat or strongly agreed that fund raising is a closely related, but separate function. Obviously, there was an overlap in those who agreed with both statements (i.e., the two indicators were not perceived as mutually exclusive).

It is helpful, therefore, to compare the percentages of those educators who *strongly* agreed with one of the two statements because none of the respondents strongly agreed with both. As shown in Table 2, only 16 percent strongly agreed that fund raising is a closely related but separate function, whereas 43 percent strongly agreed that it is a specialization of public relations. In comparison, 59 percent of the ASJMC educators strongly agreed that investor relations is a specialization of public relations.

Table 2
Percentage of Educators Strongly Agreeing With
Three Conceptual Statements

Statement	% Strongly Agreeing
Fund raising is a closely related, but separate function from public relations.	16%
Fund raising is a specialization of PR.	43%
Investor relations is a specialization of PR.	59%

(N=79)

Asked about their opinion on teaching fund raising as part of PR courses on fundamentals and principles, 54, or 68 percent, of the educators somewhat or strongly agreed that fund raising should be taught as part of such courses.

This finding can be viewed as even more positive when it is taken into account that only 14, or 18 percent, disagreed, with 12 educators expressing a neutral opinion. On the other hand, educators were evenly divided on whether fund raising should be taught as part of PR courses on writing and techniques, with 35, or 44 percent, of those responding to this section agreeing that it should, and 33, or 41 percent, disagreeing.

Conclusions

This study, for the first time, documents the extent to which fund raising currently is taught in public relations programs at ASJMC schools and departments. Although nine institutions that offer a separate course on fund raising were identified, most programs incorporate concepts of fund raising in other public relations courses. This finding, in itself, is somewhat surprising given the sparse mention of fund raising in the public relations literature.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that conceptualizing fund raising as a specialization of public relations is more prevalent among educators in ASJMC schools than originally thought (Kelly, 1991). It also is apparent from these findings that the concept of fund raising as a PR specialization is more widely held among such educators than the diametrically opposed concept of fund raising as a closely related, but separate function from public relations. Finally, whereas a greater percentage of educators conceptualize fund raising as a specialization, this conceptualization is relatively new and less accepted than the concept of investor relations as a public relations specialization.

Estimates that one-third or more of the students graduating from almost half of the public relations programs go to work for nonprofit organizations lend strong support to the need for teaching fund raising in PR programs. It is argued here that, depending on the job market for its graduates, a public relations program has an obligation to educate its students on the fund-raising activities of charitable organizations. Not only do future public relations practitioners for such nonprofit organizations need to understand fund raising as a communication function, but those who are interested in fund raising should be provided with at least an introductory level of knowledge on a career in this high-demand, high-paying specialization.

Most importantly, unless public relations educators prepare their students to manage relationships with donors, the increasing need for private gifts by America's 800,000 charitable organizations may well relegate public relations to a subservient role in support of the fund-raising function—to the detriment of public relations practitioners and to the organizations they strive to serve.

Illustrating this argument, an assistant professor attached the following personal comments to his returned questionnaire:

> I spent 10 years directing public relations in a university where fund raising is top dog and other years working in support of fund raising with nonprofit clients of my private agency partnership. . . . For me the real big question focuses on higher education where increasing numbers of public relations operations are directed totally by "development" staff whose interest in PR range from ignorance to apathy to hostility.

It can be concluded from this study that the incorporation of fund raising in public relations curricula is generally accepted by the majority of educators, but is a phenomenon that has received little attention from these same teacher-scholars. More work needs to be done on studying the relationship between public relations and fund raising—both in and out of the classroom. For example, actual and potential encroachment on public relations by the fund-raising function, as just described, is widely acknowledged by practitioners, but has yet to be documented. At the same time, there are no studies that examine students' perceptions of fund raising or the different approaches used by educators to incorporate fund raising in public relations programs.

Perhaps one of the most significant findings of this study is the deficiency of textbooks in teaching fund raising. The authors of current public relations texts need to strengthen their coverage of fund raising, and a textbook devoted to the fund-raising specialization—one that is rooted in the theory and practice of public relations—needs to be developed.

This study represents a small, but significant first step toward reaching a fuller understanding of the teaching of fund raising in public relations programs. As pointed out earlier, the population for this study excluded those who teach public relations in schools or departments other than journalism and mass communication. Its findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to programs such as those in departments of speech communication, and future studies on teaching fund raising should include representatives of such programs. However, there is some evidence that these programs do not differ significantly from ASJMC programs in their approach to fund raising.

For example, at Rutgers University, public relations is taught in the department of communication, which offered a course on fund raising, "Topic in Communication: Fundraising and Development for Communication Organizations," for the first time during the 1991 Spring Semester. The professor who developed the topic course stated that his program is planning to offer at least one course on fund raising within the next three years.

In conclusion, fund raising appears to be a new, but generally accepted phenomenon in public relations education. The question now becomes one of how fund raising can best be incorporated into the teaching of public relations. Should fund-raising concepts be covered in courses on public relations fundamentals, courses on public relations writing, in separate courses, or in some combination thereof? Will and should fund-raising courses offered by public relations programs increase as the market demand for fund raisers increases? Should such courses be aimed at the undergraduate or graduate level? Future studies will need to address these and other problems as educators increasingly recognize fund raising as a function, or specialization, of public relations.

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The Effect of World View on Public Relations Theory and Practice

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The Effect of World View on Public Relations Theory and Practice

Abstract

This paper describes the concept of world view as it has been defined in philosophy, anthropology, and other social science disciplines. It then explores world views that affect the theory and practice of public relations. These world views contrast symmetry and asymmetry in communication, presuppositions inherent in management, gender world views, the social role of public relations, and technical and managerial presuppositions about public relations. It then develops a normal theory of ethics in public relations that the authors say is an inherent part of excellent public relations.

The Effect of World Views
On Public Relations Theory and Practice

> *Thought has a self-reproductive power, and when the mind is held steadily to one idea it becomes coloured by it, and, as we may say, all the correlates of that thought arise within the mind. Hence the mystic obtains knowledge about any object of which he [sic] thinks constantly in fixed contemplation.*
>
> *H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891)*

The scientific method has changed the world and the way people think about the world. In general, the scientific method has improved people's lives and has forced them to think logically and systematically about the things they observe and experience. As a result, many professions--including public relations--have looked to science to ground the practice of their profession.

Despite the obvious benefits of the scientific method, however, there are many myths about it that have shaped the thinking of scientists, professionals, and people in general--in ways that have been detrimental to scientific understanding, professional development, and human progress. Those myths include the belief that science can be totally objective, that it can be kept neutral of values, and that it can discover "truth."

Many leading communication professionals look to the scientific method to produce a body of theoretical knowledge that will instill order on the chaos that seems to exist in public relations. Communication professionals often seem to flounder without direction in their work. In practice, "public relations" has no consistent definition. Realistically, it can be defined as little more than "what public relations people do." The work of public relations people varies tremendously from one organization to another or from one practitioner to another. To many critics, that work seems unprincipled, unethical, and atheoretical.

Scientific research and the theory it produces can help to bring order to the chaos of public relations. It cannot do that, however, unless we first identify and explore the fundamental beliefs and assumptions that people have about public relations. In the last 30 years, philosophers and historians of science have changed their views dramatically about the nature of science. Once, they believed that the scientific method could remove subjectivity from the thinking and observing of people. Scientists, they believed, could follow systematic methods to identify and understand the "truth" that lies outside their minds. Now they know that science is a very human undertaking and that humans impose their fundamental beliefs about the world on their thinking and observing.

Public relations, like the social and behavioral sciences, is especially susceptible to human subjectivity because its practitioners try to understand and explain the behavior of people. People, in other words, observe the behavior of people. Most people have "theories" about why they and others behave as they do. Those theories may seem illogical to others, but they generally make perfect sense to the people who hold them. Thus, it is quite easy for the observer--the communication researcher or practitioner--to use his or her fundamental beliefs about the world to frame and understand the behavior of others. It also is quite easy for the observed--members of publics or public relations practitioners--to reject the explanations of researchers because those explanations do not coincide with their fundamental beliefs.

The practice of public relations and theories about its practice are, therefore, affected by the assumptions that practitioners and theorists have about such things as morality, ethics, human nature, religion, politics, free enterprise, or gender. People not involved in public relations have other assumptions about the profession--assumptions that cause these people to heap scorn and mistrust upon practitioners.

Such assumptions cannot be changed easily because they usually are rooted in the culture of organizations, communities, and societies. Although the assumptions that make up the world views of people are subjective and generally rigid, philosophers and social scientists believe that they can be identified and compared and that some world views work better than others in solving the problems of organizations and societies. We begin this paper, therefore, by explaining the nature of a world view. We then identify differing world views about public relations and select the world view that we believe--and that research is beginning to show--helps organizations to use public relations most effectively.

THE ROLE OF WORLD VIEW IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

The concept of world view appears in literature throughout the humanities and social sciences, although with many names. Kearney (1984), an anthropologist, defined world view as "a set of images and assumptions about the world" (p. 10). In describing the term "image," Kearney used a definition that is more precise than the way the term "image" is used in public relations practice.[1] He pointed out that image has two meanings. One is the "literal sense of a visual representation in the mind" (p. 47)--which also is the meaning of "image" in cognitive psychology (Paivio, 1971). The other meaning, which pertains to world view, is what Kearney called "organizing principles that have variously been called schemata, *Gestalten*, plans, structures, and so on" (p. 47). This also is the meaning of "image" made famous by the economist Kenneth Boulding (1956).

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[1] The term used in public relations has so many meanings that it has little use in building theory. Public relations practitioners use the term "image" to refer to many different concepts, such as reputation, perception, attitude, message, attributes, evaluation, cognition, perception, credibility, support, belief, communication, or relationship. The average person sees "image" as the opposite of reality. In everyday language, "images" are "projected," "manipulated," "polished," and "tarnished." We believe the only escape from this confusion is not to use the term. Instead, we prefer to use one of the more precise terms to which "image" refers--such as reputation, perception, or evaluation. We also try to avoid use of the term to refer to world view, preferring the more precise notion of assumptions about the world.

Kearney (1984) also referred to world view as "macrothought." "Macrothought" describes well the concept of schema that now is extremely popular in cognitive and social psychology. Schemas (or *schemata*) are large, abstract structures of knowledge that people use to organize what they know and to make sense of new information that comes to them. Psychologists have defined schemas in different ways (Anderson, 1985; Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985; J. Grunig, Ramsey & Schneider [aka L. Grunig], 1985; J. Grunig & Childers [aka Hon], 1988). The essence of schemas can be captured, however, in Craik's (1979) notion of depth of processing--that schemas have "abstract, symbolic properties" (p. 457)--and in Markus and Zajonc's (1985) conclusion that psychologists generally view schemas as "subjective 'theories' about how the social world operates" (p. 145).

World View in Philosophy of Science

Once we realize that world views--or schemas--are theories of a sort, we can look to recent thinking about theories in the philosophy of science to help understand and evaluate the different world views that influence the study and practice of public relations.

In recent years, philosophers have abandoned the ideas of logical positivism that dominated science and the philosophy of science for decades. Logical positivists believed that theories are "true" representations of reality that can be verified by objective observation--the excessively optimistic view of the scientific method described at the beginning of this paper. Philosophers of science now realize that scientists are human, that humans are subjective, and that subjectivity plays a role in theory building.

Led by Thomas Kuhn (1970), a historian of science, many philosophers abandoned logical positivism for a completely relative view of science. They argued that science is as subjective as any other kind of thinking and that competing theories cannot be compared and evaluated objectively. Most philosophers, however, rejected this relative view, which was as extreme in the opposite direction as was logical positivism. Instead, philosophers now describe science and the theories it produces in ways that we would describe as a quasi-objective way of building knowledge (Suppe, 1977, 1989; Shapere, 1984; Laudan, 1977).[2]

Logical positivists, in general, viewed the relationship between theory and the real world as a relationship between two levels of abstraction. Theories are abstract and general. Their truth cannot be determined unless the concepts in a theory can be "operationalized"--that is, unless concrete measures of the abstract concepts can be observed in the real world. These concrete measures typically were called hypotheses, research questions, or research problems.

Contemporary philosophers of science solved the dilemma of subjectivity by adding a third level of abstraction to their view of theory and reality. This third level corresponds to what we are calling world view in this paper. Kuhn (1970) coined the term for world view that is used most often in science. He described world view as a "paradigm"--a "disciplinary matrix" that "stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (p. 175).

Meehan (1968) referred to world view as a "conceptual framework through which perceptions are screened" (p. 41). Suppe (1977) used the German term *Weltanschauung*, which refers to a comprehensive mindset. Laudan (1977) described world view in terms of a research tradition, such as Darwinism in biology or behavioralism in psychology. Laudan said a research tradition is broader than a theory and that it has presuppositions--or assumptions--that are difficult to test. Brown (1977) also used the term presupposition to refer to world view--"*a priori* propositions that the scientist sees as necessary truths" (pp. 101-109).[3]

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[2] See J. Grunig (1989) for a review of these changes in philosophy of science and their importance for public relations.

Whatever the term used, philosophers of science generally have agreed that world view functions as a type of theory at a level more abstract than the levels of theory and observation recognized by logical positivists. In their current thinking, philosophers describe world view as a *gestalt* or mindset that focuses the attention of a scientist primarily on theories or observations that fit within that mindset. For example, a free-market economist would be unlikely to see Marxist theory as relevant or to be likely to study exploitation of labor as a research problem. Nor would a behavioral psychologist be likely to have an interest in the psychology of the mind and to try to understand the nature of a thought. (A behavioralist, in addition, would not see the relevance of this paper.)

Philosophers also generally agree that the presuppositions of a world view cannot be tested directly. The theories and hypotheses that fit within the world view can be tested. But since the world view focuses the mind of the scientist only on theories and hypotheses that are relevant to or make sense within his or her world view, this third and most abstract level of theory introduces subjectivity into the philosopher's explanation of how science works.

World View in Other Disciplines

In addition to anthropology, psychology, and philosophy, concepts of world view appear in other disciplines. Morgan (1986), for example, described eight different images--or metaphors--that theorists have used to describe and explain organizations--organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, "flux and transformation," and instruments of domination.

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[3] Kearney (1984) also identified the concept of presuppositions in Collingwood's (1940) writing on metaphysics.

The introduction of a subjective level of theory into our understanding of science also opens the possibility of a merging of science with religion or with ethics, which generally have been considered to be "metaphysical"--beyond physics--and therefore untestable. Torrance (1989), a theologian, sounded much like a philosopher of science when he said:

> ...fundamental ideas...actually play a considerable and indeed an essential part in scientific investigation and verification. Hence the more rigorous scientific inquiry is, the more it will take care to examine and test these fundamental ideas, if only because they determine the kind of question we ask and the kind of answers we receive. (p. 71)

Vroom (1989) compared the major religions of the world and concluded that although each has a different world view, each of these world views has common elements. Kearney (1984) developed a similar theory of culture-based world views.

Thus, we begin to see that world views can be compared and evaluated even though they are subjective. From the perspective of science, this means that different conceptual frameworks can be compared for their ability to solve important problems (Laudan, 1977). From the perspective of religion, it means that morals and ethics can be introduced into science. According to Torrance (1989), for example, "...the moral imperative, the 'ought' that had been banished from the realm of science in the Age of Reason, would have to be restored to the conceptual structure of science" (p. 73).

Evaluating World Views

Mind moves matter.

Vergil (B.C. 70-19)

Mind is indeed the source of bondage and also the source of liberation. To be bound to things of this world: This is bondage. To be free from them: This is liberation.

Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)

The subjectivity of the human mind plays an important role in how people think about public relations--and in how they study it and practice it. As a result, we must address this subjective component of theories about public relations--both popular and scientific--if we are to understand and foster excellence in communication practice. To distinguish excellent from less excellent public relations, we must be able to compare and evaluate world views.

As Vergil said, "Mind moves matter." In more recent times, Kearney (1984) said the same thing: "In the short run people's actions are best explained by the ideas they have in their heads" (p. 4) and, "Specific world views result in certain patterns of behavior and not in others" (p. 53). But, as the Upanishads added, only the mind can free people of the bondage of their world view. That is, we can change world views only by identifying them and choosing to adopt one or to change to another.

Some philosophers such as Collingwood (1940), Kuhn (1970), Feyerabend (1970), and Bohm (1977) have argued that world views are completely subjective. They believe that people, groups, or societies choose one world view rather than another by arguing, fighting, voting, or mobilizing supporters--a dialectical process--rather than through reason, negotiation, or compromise. Others, however, maintain that there are quasi-rational ways of evaluating world views.

Kearney (1984) said, for example, that world views can be evaluated on the basis of internal and external criteria. From an internal perspective, he said that some world views have assumptions that "are logically and structurally related to each other better than others" (p. 52). Vroom (1989) listed similar internal criteria: "obviousness, coherence, freedom from contradiction, unity, relevance, etc." (p. 96). From an external perspective, Kearney (1984) said that some world views allow people to relate better to their environments than others. He also said that we can judge world views by "some presumably more valid historical perspective" (p. 57).

Philosophers of science also have suggested ways of comparing and evaluating world views. Suppe (1977) and Shapere (1984) have said that the theories generated by competing world views can be compared by neutral direct observations or through indirect observations that are based on noncontroversial background information or background theories. In other words, these philosophers believe that people can find some criteria or effects on which they agree to compare world views.

Laudan (1977) suggested perhaps the most useful criterion--the ability of a world view (and the theories it generates) to solve important problems. In public relations we might ask, for example, which world view generates public relations programs that best resolve conflict in society, resolve national and international issues, make organizations more socially responsible, or make organizations more effective. Morgan (1986) elaborated on this view after identifying eight "images" that theorists have used to understand organizations:

> Our discussion brings us to a very important point: that there is a close relationship between the way we think and the way we act, and that many organizational problems are embedded in our thinking. This has very important consequences. First, it encourages us to take ownership of the part we play in shaping the problems we have to solve. ...Second, an appreciation of the close relationship between thoughts and actions can help to create new ways of organizing. (p. 335)

World views also can be compared on the basis of ethics. Vroom (1989) reported that writers on religion have mentioned love as a criterion or the ability of a world view to "help people find a right relationship to themselves, their neighbor, and the universe" (p. 96). Torrance (1989) said that science should look for the "good" as well as the "orderly" and suggested that the "good" is that which produces a "reunified human culture" (p. 82).

From this we can conclude that an excellent world view for public relations is one that is logical, coherent, unified, and orderly--the internal criterion. It also should be effective in solving organizational and human problems, as judged by relatively neutral research or by history--the external criterion. Finally, it should be ethical in that it helps organizations build caring--even loving--*relationships* with other individuals and groups they affect in a society or the world.

Given this understanding of the nature and effect of world views and means of evaluating them, we now can describe the world views that we believe affect the practice of public relations and the management of organizations. We then can use the three kinds of criteria just identified to evaluate the contribution of those world views to excellence in public relations.

In our opinion, three world views have limited the excellence and accompanying effectiveness of public relations--the view that public relations is asymmetrical (something that organizations do to publics), the view that public relations either has a neutral or advocacy role in society, and the view that public relations is a technical function. In contrast, we argue that excellent public relations is symmetrical, idealistic or critical, and managerial.

SYMMETRICAL VS. ASYMMETRICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

> *For me, public relations boils down to getting people to do what you want them to do.*
>
> *James L. Tolley (Tolley, 1988)*

> *If you are communicating effectively, you will get positive recognition from the audiences you are trying to influence, which means people will think what you are doing is right and that you are doing it in the right way. When you get positive recognition your influence grows. You are perceived as competent, effective, worthy of respect--powerful.* *Robert L. Dilenschneider (Dilenschneider, 1990, p. 8)*

> *What I'll call the "Department of State" P.R. model is an idealistic goal, but a great deal of P.R. activity fits within a "Department of Defense" analogy. There are vigorous P.R. battalions on both side of many of the divisive issues our society is confronting, with limited or little hope of negotiation. These battalions seek dominant status for their viewpoints.* *Lawrence R. Tavcar (Tavcar, 1990)*

Each of the above three quotes comes from a practitioner who works or has worked in major public relations firms or for major corporations. Each quote describes what we consider to be the dominant world view in public relations--the asymmetrical view that public relations is a way of getting what an organization wants without changing its behavior or without compromising. It is an alluring mindset for most organizations: All one has to do to get what one wants is to hire a public relations person who will make you look "competent, effective, worthy of respect--*powerful*," even if you are not.

Alluring as this mindset may be, we contend that research does not support its supposed powerful effects. And, we believe that the mindset guides organizations in directions that are ineffective and not in their long-term interests. We believe that excellent public relations departments adopt the more realistic view that public relations is a symmetrical process of compromise and negotiation and not a war for power. In the long run, the symmetrical view is more effective: Organizations get *more* of what they want when they give up *some* of what they want.

J. Grunig and his colleagues and students launched the discussion of asymmetrical and symmetrical world views in public relations when they introduced the concept of four models of public relations (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1989).

Press agentry, public information, and two-way asymmetrical are asymmetrical models--that is, they attempt to change the behavior of publics without changing the behavior of the organization. Under the "press agentry" model, public relations strives for publicity in the media in almost any way possible. With the "public information" model, public relations uses journalists in residence to disseminate objective but only favorable information about the organization. With "two-way asymmetrical" public relations, the organization uses research to develop messages that are most likely to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants.

An organization that uses the "two-way symmetrical" model, in contrast, uses research and dialogue to manage conflict, improve understanding, and build relationships with publics. With the symmetrical model, both the organization and publics can be persuaded; both also may change their behavior.

J. Grunig (1989a) first described the world views that he believes are inherent in these four models at a conference on public relations theory at Illinois State University. In that paper, he argued that an asymmetrical mindset has dominated the practice of public relations and, in addition, public perceptions of public relations. Such a mindset, he said, "defines public relations as the use of communication to manipulate publics for the benefit of organizations" (p. 18).

The difference between the asymmetrical and symmetrical world views has a number of implications for the construction of a theory of excellence in public relations. World view defines which special theories are relevant for a general theory of public relations and which problems constitute public relations problems. The world view of a public relations department also relates closely to the world view of the organization that sponsors it, a relationship that explains the underlying conditions necessary for excellent public relations.

Symmetry and Asymmetry in Communication.

The difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical communication was highlighted in papers presented by J. Grunig (1989a) and Miller (1989) and in the debate that ensued at the conference on public relations theory at Illinois State University. At that conference, J. Grunig (1989a) argued that the asymmetrical world view steers public relations practitioners toward actions that are unethical, socially irresponsible, and ineffective. He argued that practitioners with an asymmetrical world view presuppose that the organization knows best and that publics benefit from "cooperating" with it. Asymmetrical practitioners with a social conscience, he added, sometimes convince themselves that they are manipulating publics for the benefit of those publics--as Olasky (1984) argued was the case for Edward L. Bernays. J. Grunig contended, however, that the mutual benefits of asymmetrical public relations are self deceptive:

> Although the asymmetrical perspective may sound like a reasonable position, keep in mind that organizations often expect publics to accept strange things as a result of "cooperation": pollution, toxic waste, drinking, smoking, guns, overthrow of governments, dangerous products, lowered salary and benefits, discrimination against women and minorities, job layoffs, dangerous manufacturing plants, risky transportation of products, higher prices, monopoly power, poor product quality, political favoritism, insider trading, use of poisonous chemicals, exposure to carcinogens, nuclear weapons, and even warfare. The list could on and on. The list is important because few of the organizations advocating these positions believe the practices are detrimental to the publics they ask to adopt the behaviors. (p. 32)

J. Grunig concluded that--in spite of the good intentions of practitioners--it is difficult, if not impossible, to practice public relations in a way that is ethical and socially responsible using an asymmetrical model.

Miller (1989), in contrast, argued that persuasion and public relations are "Two 'Ps' in a Pod"--that communication and persuasion are linked inextricably even though they may not be synonymous terms.[4] Miller said that communication is the way in which human beings attempt to exert control over their symbolic environment:

> From birth to death, people seek warmth rather than chilling cold; full bellies rather than empty ones; and respect, affection, and love rather than contempt, social isolation, and hatred. Thus, the quest for environmental control is a crucial fabric of the tapestry of our lives, a human activity as natural and pervasive as breathing. In this broad sense, then, the concept of seeking control is *amoral*, just as breathing or eating is amoral; it is an inevitable aspect of *being alive*. (p. 46)

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[4] Berlo (1960) took this position in an early and influential book on communication theory.

Miller went on to define public relations as "a process that centers on exerting symbolic control over certain aspects of the environment...of attempting to exert symbolic control over the evaluative predispositions ('attitudes,' 'images,' etc.) and subsequent behaviors of relevant publics or clienteles. ...*Whenever control of the environment hinges on the attitudes and behaviors of others, attempts to control these attitudes and behaviors are inevitable*" (p. 47).

Miller (1989, p. 47) acknowledged that the control of attitudes and behaviors of publics is considerably narrower than the all-inclusive goal of living comfortably in one's environment, which he described as an inevitable aspect of being alive. Thus, we would separate Miller's general and specific goals. We would argue that an organization does not have to "control" its environment to survive and live comfortably in it. In fact, Miller's argument that it is inevitable for an organization to control its symbolic environment is analogous to a view of the relationship between the human race and its physical environment that has led to the despoiling of that environment.

Lowe (1987) traced the philosophical views of the relations between humans and their environment in the literature on environmental ethics. One view, which is found in the Bible among other places, parallels Miller's (1989) definition of public relations as control. That view holds that humans should conquer the earth and exert dominion over it. The other view argues that people are "plain members and citizens of the biotic community, instead of conquerors of it" (p. 43)--a view popularized by the well-known environmentalist Aldo Leopold (1949). Lowe pointed out that "pollution, loss of habitat and species, and other signs of environmental degradation" cannot be halted unless people "change some of our fundamental values and assumptions with which we define our place in nature" (p. 2).

In their symbolic environment, we believe, organizations can wreak havoc on their publics when their fundamental values and assumptions--their world view--suggest that it is ethical for the organization to "exercise dominion" over that environment. Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) took the same view as Leopold, in essence, when they argued, symmetrically, that public relations "should be practiced as an active attempt to restore a sense of community" rather than as a "vocation utilizing persuasive communication to obtain a vested goal on behalf of a represented client" (p. xi).

We cannot establish by analogy that the damage people have done to their natural environment supports the conclusion that organizations have done similar damage to publics in their symbolic environments. The comparison does suggest that we compare the quality of life of organizations and publics and the relationships among them as a means of evaluating the symmetrical and asymmetrical world views--an aspect of ethics that we will examine at the end of this paper.

Symmetry and Asymmetry in Organizations

Public relations units do not exist in isolation in organizations, and the presuppositions guiding their activities are a part of the social structure and culture that integrates the organization. No one public relations practitioner or even a single public relations department is accountable for the approach that an organization takes to communication. In the words of the prominent sociologist and management theorist, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1981):

> Insuring that organizations conform to societal purposes requires that the desired perspectives are implanted into the core decision processes of the organization. It requires becoming involved with the formulation of the patterns themselves, rather than holding accountable individuals whose acts have largely been shaped by those patterns. (p. 87)

Thus, to develop excellence in public relations, one must look at the cultural presuppositions of the organization as well as the presuppositions of public relations. In his book *World View*, Kearney (1984) isolated what he considered to be "universals" in the world views of all cultures. As we will see, scholars both of public relations and of organizations have identified similar characteristics in the cultures of organizations.

Of these universals the most important for our purpose is the relationship between "Self and Other." According to Kearney, people consider themselves to be distinct from the environment. Some cultures conceive of the relationship as one of interdependence and harmony and others as one of subordinance and dominance. In the first world view, people see an "ecological relationship," in which they "see themselves as intimately connected with the Other and see their well-being as dependent on its well-being" (p. 74). Other cultures, in contrast, consider the relationship one of individualism or "as a struggle for existence in which the fittest survive" (p. 76).

J. Grunig (1989a) spelled out several presuppositions that he believes explain the asymmetrical and symmetrical world views, world views that characterize this same difference in assumptions about the relationship between self and other. The asymmetrical world view, he said, is characterized by the following (pp. 32-33):

Internal orientation. Members of the organization look out from the organization and do not see the organization as outsiders see it.

Closed system. Information flows out from the organization and not into it.

Efficiency. Efficiency and control of costs are more important than innovation.

Elitism. Leaders of the organization know best. They have more knowledge than members of publics. Wisdom is not the product of a "free marketplace of ideas."

Conservatism. Change is undesirable. Outside efforts to change the organization should be resisted; pressure for change should be considered subversive.

Tradition. Tradition provides an organization with stability and helps it to maintain its culture.

Central authority. Power should be concentrated in the hands of a few top managers. Employees should have little autonomy. Organizations should be managed as autocracies.

In contrast to these asymmetrical presuppositions, J. Grunig (1989) said that organizations with a symmetrical world view typically have the following presuppositions in their culture (pp. 38-39):

Interdependence. Organizations cannot isolate themselves from their environment. Although organizations have boundaries that separate them from their environment, publics and other organizations in that environment "interpenetrate" the organization.

Open system. The organization is open to interpenetrating systems and freely exchanges information with those systems.

Moving equilibrium. Organizations as systems strive toward an equilibrium with other systems, an equilibrium state that constantly moves as the environment changes. Systems may attempt to establish equilibrium by controlling other systems; by adapting themselves to other systems; or by making mutual, cooperative adjustments. The symmetrical world view prefers cooperative and mutual adjustment to control and adaptation.

Equity. People should be given equal opportunity and be respected as fellow human beingsAnyone, regardless or education or background may provide valuable input into an organization.[5]

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[5] J. Grunig (1989) called this presupposition "equality" rather than "equity." We now see equity as a more appropriate term. People should be treated "equitably" even though "equality" seldom results. The change from equality to equity comes from reading Gilligan (1982), which is discussed in the section on gender below.

Autonomy. People are more innovative, constructive, and self-fulfilled when they have the autonomy to influence their own behavior, rather than having it controlled by others. Autonomy maximizes employee satisfaction inside the organization and cooperation outside the organization.

Innovation. New ideas and flexible thinking should be stressed rather than tradition and efficiency.

Decentralization of management. Management should be collective; managers should coordinate rather than dictate. Decentralization increases autonomy, employee satisfaction, and innovation.

Responsibility. People and organizations must be concerned with the consequences of their behaviors on others and attempt to eliminate adverse consequences.

Conflict resolution. Conflict should be resolved through negotiation, communication, and compromise and not through force, manipulation, coercion, or violence.

Interest-group liberalism. Classical liberalism, which typically champions big government, can be as closed-minded as classical conservatism, which typically champions big business. Interest-group liberalism, however, views the political system as a mechanism for open negotiation among interest or issue groups (Lowi, 1979; J. Grunig, 1989b). Interest-group liberalism looks to citizens' groups to "champion interests of ordinary people against unresponsive government and corporate structures" (Boyte, 1980, p. 7).

Pauchant and Mitroff (1988) isolated a similar set of presuppositions embedded in the cultures of organizations that respond to crises in what they considered a healthy manner and those that respond in an unhealthy manner. They called the unhealthy organizations "self-inflated corporations." They are "essentially narcissistic...They care only or mainly about themselves. A crisis is something which happens mainly only to them and not to their customers or their environment." The healthy organizations, which they call "positive self-regard organizations," have "exactly the opposite characteristics" (p. 56).

Pauchant and Mitroff (1988) compared the two kinds of organizations on five presuppositions and found differences that nearly mirror those described by J. Grunig (1989a):

Humanity's relationship to nature. Unhealthy organizations see their relationship to the environment as one of dominance or subjugation. Healthy organizations treat the stakeholders in the environment as "fellow human beings" and try to alleviate the impact of a crisis on them as well as on the organization (p. 57).

The nature of reality and truth. Unhealthy organizations use many defense mechanisms to avoid responsibility "when the reality of crises confronts their self-inflated fantasies" (p. 57). Healthy organizations more often assume responsibility.

The nature of human nature. Unhealthy organizations divide stakeholders into "them and us," "good guys and bad guys." They especially are likely to perceive the mass media as "evil" when they focus the attention of outsiders on "the lack of perfection of the particular corporations under crisis" (p. 58). Healthy companies, in contrast, know their strengths and competencies but also "point out their deficiencies and need for improvement" (p. 59).

The nature of human activities. Unhealthy organizations are passive and fatalistic. They do something "for the sake of doing something" or because they are used to doing it. The healthy organizations "believe in strategic action. They accept the guilt and anxiety induced by crises in order to be in a position to act against them" (pp. 59-60).

The nature of human relationship. Unhealthy organizations see their relationships with other groups of people as competitive and individualistic. Healthy organizations more often view the relationship as cooperative; although, paradoxically, most look upon the relationship as both competitive and cooperative.

Pauchant and Mitroff's (1988) discovery that organizations can mix competition and cooperation suggests that a symmetrical world view of public relations does not force practitioners to divorce themselves from the self interest of their clients. In fact, most practitioners will have "mixed motives" and excellent public relations, as we will see next, can blend self interest with public interest.

Mixed Motives in the Symmetrical World View

Some critics of the symmetrical world view--both practitioners and theorists--claim that the approach is unrealistic or idealistic. They argue that organizations hire public relations people as advocates to advance their interests and not as "do gooders" who "give in" to outsiders with an agenda different from that of the organization. In short, these critics believe that organizations would not hire a public relations person who does not practice asymmetrically.

Organizations do indeed want public relations people to work in their interest. They do not want to give in to all outside demands on the organization when they believe the organization's position is right. As Tuleja (1985) put it, "No responsible manager completely rejects return on investment...Corporations are not charitable organizations" (p. 185). But, he added, people in organizations have "divided loyalties" to the organization and to society. And, he maintained, "good guys can finish first": "...there is very good evidence that those who behave ethically toward their various constituencies are also those who make the most money" (p. 199).

Another term for "divided loyalties" is "mixed motives," a concept from game theory that Murphy (1991) introduced to public relations theory. Public relations people generally are motivated both by their loyalty to the organization that employs them and to the publics affected by the behavior of the organization. These mixed motives do not make the symmetrical world view unrealistic, however. Tuleja (1985) pointed out that the Golden Rule (Do onto others as you would have them do unto you) works because it of what he believes to be its selfish aspects:

> The Golden Rule works not in spite of selfishness, but because of it. Jesus, that supreme psychologist, was also a supreme egoist. That is why he understood love. (p. 24)

Tuleja interprets the rule as selfish because it mandates that people should think of how *they*would like to be treated by others and then treat others in the same way.

Thirty years ago, the functionalist sociologist Alvin Gouldner (1960) wrote that a "norm of reciprocity" is a universal component of moral codes. He pointed out that Aristotle had observed that people are "more ready to receive than to give benefits." People tend toward egoism, he said, because of "a salient (but not exclusive) concern with the satisfaction of one's own needs" (p. 173).

But, he added, "there is an altruism in egoism, made possible through reciprocity":

> ...egoism can motivate one party to satisfy the expectations of the other, since by doing so he (*sic*) induces the latter to reciprocate and to satisfy his (*sic*) own. (p. 173)

In short, excellent organizations realize that they can get more of what they want by giving publics some of what they want. Reciprocity means that publics, too, will be willing to give up some of what they want to the organization. The logic of reciprocity breaks down, however, when one actor (such as an organization) has more power than another (such as a public). "Given significant power differences," according to Gouldner (1960), "egoistic motivations may seek to get benefits without returning them" (p. 174).

Rakow (1989a) criticized the symmetrical approach to public relations as impractical because she believed that organizations in the U. S. social system, at least, have more power than publics and therefore no motivation for reciprocity. Mallinson (1990), similarly, argued that the two-way symmetrical model would work better in the more egalitarian cultures of Europe than it would in the United States. And Pavlik (1989) showed, in game theory terms, that organizations are unlikely to practice public relations symmetrically until publics gain equal power.

Part of the answer to the dilemma of unequal power has been resolved because publics have gained power by organizing into activist groups. But in many relationships with publics, organizations still hold the upper hand. In that case, Gouldner (1960) proposed that a "generalized norm of reciprocity" would solve the dilemma of unequal power. Most moral codes, he said, contain a norm that reciprocity is good or necessary--even if people or organizations can get what they want by exerting their power. Organizations that do not adhere to this general norm lose the trust and credibility of the larger society of which they are a part. Thus, excellent organizations would seem likely to incorporate the norm into their business or organizational ethics and, in turn, into their ethics of public relations. The norm of reciprocity is the essence of what generally is called social responsibility. In Gouldner's (1960) words:

> The norm of reciprocity, however, engenders motives for returning benefits even when power differences might invite exploitation. The norm thus safeguards powerful people against the temptations of their own status; it motivates and regulates reciprocity as an exchange pattern, serving to inhibit the emergence of exploitative relations which would undermine the social system and the very power arrangements which had made exploitation possible. (p. 174)

As the last sentence of this quote indicates, Gouldner (1960) argued that a norm of reciprocity stabilizes a social system. But he also addressed the most frequently cited failure of functional theory--its inability to explain the origins of social systems as well as the stability of ongoing systems. The norm of reciprocity provides a "starting mechanism" for social relationships, he explained, an assumed type of behavior that allows social actors--including organizations and publics--to deal with each other when they have had no prior relationship. When we assume that the other party will reciprocate our actions, in other words, we can treat it fairly even though we might have more power.

Reciprocity, Gouldner added, also can be negative. That is, we can assume that if an organization treats a public poorly, the public will in turn treat the organization poorly. The norm of reciprocity, therefore, is an integral part of the symmetrical world view that is an essential part of excellent public relations.

The concept of reciprocity--including both selfish reciprocity and the generalized norm when there are differences in power--allows us to accommodate mixed motives into the symmetrical world view. Recent advancements in rhetorical theory by scholars of speech communication allow us to "come to terms with mixed motives," in the words of Cheney and Tompkins (1984, p. 18). Much of this advancement is based on the work of Kenneth Burke and Jurgen Habermas and has produced theories that "counterbalance the sender orientation of traditional rhetoric with stress on a receiver orientation in the [Burke's] rhetoric of identification" (Cheney & Tompkins, 1984, p. 18).

Booth (1981), for example, described four types of rhetoric that parallel the four models of public relations:

> *Sub-rhetoric.* "...words or other symbols are being used to deceive or to obscure issues or evade action." (p. 29) (= press agentry)
>
> *Mere rhetoric.* "...the whole art of sincere selling of any cause, not just the trickery part of the disguise, but the genuinely persuasive parts too, including the logical arguments." (p. 29) (= public information)
>
> *Rhetoric-B.* This, essentially, is the rhetoric of Aristotle, in which the rhetorician discovers or invents the "possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatsoever" (p. 31). "Rhetoric-B is the art of knowing what you want, and finding the really good arguments to win others to your side, It is the art of the good lawyer, of the effective business leader, of the successful fund raiser, and it is not to be scoffed at or ignored. But it does not itself teach us what ends it should serve; it is still an art without essential restraints other than those provided by the

> counterrhetoric created by other warriors or competitors. The world it builds, left on its own, is a world of a free market of atomized persons and ideas, each privately seeking victory and hoping that in the melee a public good will be produced by some invisible hand." (pp. 32-33) (= two-way asymmetrical)

Booth's (1981) description of Rhetoric-B, in particular, identifies the shortcomings of the asymmetrical world view. In that world view, communication becomes a war of words with no restraints built in to preserve the public good--an ethical difference that will be addressed in the last section of this paper. Contrast Rhetoric-B with a new form of rhetoric:

> *Rhetoric-A.* "...a supreme art of inquiry through symbols that is designed, not to win by cheating, as in sub-rhetoric, nor merely to win sincerely, as in mere rhetoric, and not just to marshall all of the good reasons there might be for accepting what one knows already, but rather to discover and refine, in critical exchange, our ends, our purposes, our values. (pp. 34-35) (= two-way symmetrical)

Booth added that Rhetoric A can be time consuming and inefficient. No other society, he said, has "committed itself so passionately to the search for rhetoric-A...with committee work, with the cumbersomeness of representative government, with the absurdities of our thousands of national conventions, colloquia, conferences, workshops and commissions. ... Well, that rhetoric-A for you?" (p. 35).

Much argument, debate, persuasion--and compromise--take place in these communication forums. Motives are mixed but when the world view is symmetrical, in the words of Cheney and Dionisopoulis (1989), "Organizations, specifically their communications officers, should represent interests in such a way that both persuades and allows for others to persuade" (p. 148).

The symmetrical world view can accommodate mixed motives in public relations. Before leaving the discussion of the difference between asymmetrical and symmetrical world views, however, we address an additional correlate of those world views: gender differences.

Gender Differences in World View

> *As the events of women's lives and of history intersect with their feelings and thought, a concern with individual survival comes to be branded as "selfish" and to be counterposed to the "responsibility" of a life lived in relationships. ...The truths of relationship, however, return in the rediscovery of connection, in the realization that self and other are interdependent and that life, however valuable in itself, can only be sustained by care in relationships.* *(Gilligan, 1982, p. 127)*

In her pioneering book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1982) articulated a difference in the orientations of men and women that also has been reflected in an extensive literature on women in management (e.g., Moore, 1986; Stead, 1985). Men are more concerned with competition, rights, and fairness; women are more concerned with relationships, responsibility, and equity (Gilligan, 1982, p. 164). The conventional wisdom has been that these differences make men more suitable as managers because of their preference for competition and "toughness." Recently, however, researchers have begun to realize that women's preference for nurturance and relationships may be exactly what is needed by managers in the future (e.g., Aburdene, 1990).

In recent years, the gender balance in public relations has moved from being a heavy male majority to being a female majority. Many leaders in the public relations profession have worried that female dominance would limit the salaries in and status of public relations because of traditional discrimination toward female-dominated professions (Toth, 1988). Feminists, however, have argued just the opposite, that the feminine viewpoint will be valuable to public relations because of a "commitment to antiauthoritarian, antielitist, participatory, and emancipatory values." (L. Grunig, 1988, p. 53). Rakow (1989b) added:

> The classical liberal ideology of individualism and competition might be thought of as the dominant (i.e., public), masculine one, the alternate ideology of cooperation and community as the suppressed (private) feminine one. ...feminist research has demonstrated that white women are likely to think of themselves in terms of their relationships rather than in terms of autonomy; to perform unrecognized and unvalued work holding together relationships, families, and communities; to prefer cooperative and collaborative styles of interacting and organizing. (pp. 293-294)

Terms such as "values," "ideology," and "truths" in the quotes above make it clear that the differences commonly attributed to men and women are part of their respective world views. The feminine world view seems to be a symmetrical world view and the masculine world view an asymmetrical one. Thus, a female majority in public relations could move the field toward excellence as the symmetrical world view of most women begins to replace the more asymmetrical world view of most men.

That women could enhance the excellence of public relations does not mean, however, that men cannot practice in an excellent fashion also. Psychologists have demonstrated that both men and women can have feminine world views or that their world view can have both feminine and masculine components.[6] In public relations, this means that men who want to practice excellent public relations can learn the value of such concepts as interdependence, relationships, and equity from women (L. Grunig, 1989).

PRESUPPOSITIONS ABOUT THE SOCIAL ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Throughout our discussion of asymmetrical and symmetrical world views about public relations, we have mentioned concepts such as "community," the "social system," and "social responsibility." Public relations has a role in society; and many European scholars, such as Ruhl (1990), have devoted more of their theorizing to understanding that role than to understanding the value of public relations to an organization.

Most practitioners and scholars have presuppositions about the social role of public relations, even though they may not articulate them or be aware of them. Some of these presuppositions enhance the excellence of public relations and others detract from it. In addition, some are symmetrical and some are asymmetrical. First, we look at some of the world views on social role that are less likely to lead to excellence.

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[6] This literature is review by Wetherell (1989).

The Pragmatic Social Role

This view of social role appears in statements about the contribution of public relations to the bottom line or in public relations as a results-oriented practice. The presupposition here is that public relations is a useful practice, which "adds value" and which can be used to meet the objectives of a client organization in a way that benefits the client. This presupposition underlies the commercial practice of public relations and typically allies it with marketing objectives. It also may underlie arguments *against* the development of codes of conduct or ethical standards in public relations practice, because these may set unacceptable limits on what can be done to achieve the client's objectives.

When followed to its extreme, this presupposition leads to practices that, if brought to public attention, bring public relations into disrepute or, at least, allow the client to dictate public relations practice. Public relations firms, especially, practice pragmatic public relations when they provide any service to a client in order to make money for the firm. The pragmatic world view in public relations sees society as composed of competing groups, target audiences, and markets from whom commercial advantage is to be won. Society is a marketplace for ideas, services, and products. Publics are customers, and opposition is to be neutralized in pursuit of commercial objectives.

The pragmatic social view is common in public relations; because of its concern only for doing what the client wants, however, it cannot be excellent and seldom makes the organization more effective. Generally, the pragmatic world view also is asymmetrical because that is how the client perceives public relations. The next two presuppositions about social role, however, are clearly asymmetrical.

The Conservative Social Role

According to the conservative presupposition, public relations defends and maintains the *status quo* (see, e.g., Tedlow, 1979, who describes public relations as a "defensive political device." Pimlott (1951) suggested that public relations justifies and defends the privileges of the economically powerful and that public relations practitioners, like politicians and teachers, are essentially articulate apologists for a social system based on what are, in some cases, insupportable inequalities. Sussman (1949) described public relations as based on a defensive ideology.

Modern reflections of this view are found in the writings of Philip Lesly in books such as *Overcoming Opposition*, which explains how public relations can overcome threats to the *status quo*. In practice, a conservative view of social role leads practitioners to adopt a defensive or protective outlook on their clients' interests--i.e., an asymmetrical outlook.

Practitioners with this social view also see society in conservative terms. They believe in defending the *status quo* and an idealized capitalist system from attack. Writers on public relations working from this presupposition talk of public relations' "arsenals," armories or weapons, which can be used to overcome opposition, to target audiences, or to defeat "intellectual terrorists" (a term recently used in the United Kingdom to describe opponents of some of the activities of tobacco and drug companies [Pielle Newsletter, 1988]). The next world view, which comes from the opposite side of the political spectrum, is equally asymmetrical.

The Radical Social Role

The radical world view presupposes that public relations contributes to change within organizations and in society. It does so by providing an outside perspective to management about the organization and its internal functioning. In the wider society, public relations contributes to social change by providing information for use in public debate, by establishing links between groups in society, and by bringing resources together that can be brought to bear on the solution of social problems.

This world view sees society as a system in which knowledge and information provide power and influence, which can be used to bring about change. Goldhaber, Dennis, Richetto, and Wiio (1979) argued, for example, that power and influence within organizations have passed to people such as public relations practitioners who can provide information about the environment to decision makers. Hofstede (1980) argued that practitioners should act as agents of change within organizations, to help them to adjust to changing public expectations.

Both the conservative and radical world views assume that organizational communication can have powerful effects on society. They see public relations as a tool to be used in a war among opposing social groups. More excellent public relations programs, we believe, take the next, more symmetrical approach.

The Idealistic Social Role

Idealistic presuppositions about public relations appear in codes of conduct, definitions of the practice, conference speeches, and academic writing about the practice. This world view presupposes that public relations serves the public interest, develops mutual understanding between organizations and their publics, contributes to informed debate about issues in society, and facilitates a dialogue between organizations and their publics.

Whereas the radical social role sees public relations as a way of directing social change in ways it prefers, the idealistic world view sees society as emerging from compromise--from the peaceful resolution of conflict between groups in society. It assumes a pluralist and progressive society, in which a diversity of views and their reconciliation lead to social progress.

In other terms, the idealistic social view assumes that a norm of reciprocity governs society and that norms makes it possible for public relations to play the role envisioned in the symmetrical world view, which is closely aligned with this world view. Excellent public relations practice, therefore, generally will be symmetrical and idealistic. Two more academic views of the social role of public relations remain, however, which are analogues of these more practice-oriented views.

The Neutral Social Role

Scholars who take this view adopt the view of science that we called logical positivism early in this paper. They view public relations as a neutral object of study and focus on such questions as the motivations of organization when they initiate public relations activities, the goals and objectives toward which public relations activities are directed, and the effects of public relations. Like sociologists, these scholars view society as an object of study and raise questions about the social role of public relations.

Observation and interpretation are the essence of all scholarship, but contemporary philosophers of science generally reject the idea that observation and interpretation can be neutral. World view and values affect both, and both lead to criticisms of the behaviors observed and recommendations for more effective behaviors.

The Critical Social Role

Critical scholars range from radical Marxists to empirical scholars who draw implications from their data for change in public relations practice. Critical scholars view organizations and society as *constructed* systems, systems that can be *deconstructed* and *reconstructed*. Critical scholars have done research to document the poor ethics, negative social consequences, or ineffectiveness of forms of public relations that differ from normative theories of excellent public relations.

Some critics have evaluated public relations from a political perspective. Olasky (1987, 1989), a conservative, has maintained that corporations have used public relations to consort with government--thus restricting competition. Gandy (1982), a Marxist, has argued that public relations helps to preserve the dominant power structure in society. Other critical scholars such as Rakow (1989a), a feminist, have suggested that the two-way symmetrical model of public relations cannot work in the United States without a radical transformation of its culture and political structure.

Rhetorical theorists such as Smilowitz and Pearson (1989), Cheney and Dionisopoulos (1989), and Pearson (1989a, 1989b) have examined public relations against the yardstick provided by rhetorical theories such as Habermas' (1984) ideal communication situation or Burke's theory of "identification" in persuasion--the co-creation by the persuader and persuadee of a state-of-affairs (Gusfield, 1989).[7] As mentioned above, a large and growing community of scholars has begun to use feminist theory to criticize public relations (e.g., L. Grunig, 1988, 1989; Toth, 1988; Creedon, 1991; Rakow, 1989b; Cline, 1985). Finally, quantitative researchers have used the theories they have developed from observing how organizations practice public relations to criticize that practice and to advocate more effective practices.

Excellent public relations, in summary, envisions its role in society from an idealistic world view. And it is fostered, we believe, by scholars who criticize actual practice against such a standard. Many public relations practitioners reject that world view as well as the criticism of scholars. One aspect of the dominant world view of public relations remains, however, before we examine the normative implications of the excellent world view.

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[7] Toth and Heath (1991) provide a complete volume of research using rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations.

TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL PRESUPPOSITIONS ABOUT PUBLIC RELATIONS

> *Public relations is a craft, a technique, a discipline; but it's not a profession. ...Apart from academe, who ever worries about PR's not having a substantial body of knowledge? I'll bet it keeps Hill & Knowlton CEO Robert Dilenschneider awake nights.*
>
> The Ragan Report, *March 20, 1989*

This opinion, stated in one of the mostly widely read newsletters on public relations and communication, reflects another element in the world view of many organizations and public relations practitioners--that public relations is technique and not theory. It can be found in popular books on public relations such as Wood with Gunther (1988), which was written by a former executive of Carl Byoir and Associates and which describes the day-to day work of public relations only in terms of technique. The world view also can be found in the more sophisticated book by Hill and Knowlton's CEO, Robert Dilenschneider (1990), which Edward L. Bernays (1990) described in a book review as more about tactics than strategy.

The world view of public relations as technique is associated closely with the press agentry and public information models of public relations. And it underlies the notion that public relations is a marketing function. Kotler and Andreasen (1987), for example, argued that marketing is strategic but public relations is not.

Public relations researchers have documented the need for a managerial as well as a technical role in excellent public relations departments. The need for a managerial role falls on deaf ears, however, when the prevailing world view among practitioners or in an organization is that public relations is a set of techniques and that a theory of management is not necessary to underlie those techniques.

A NORMATIVE THEORY OF ETHICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

World views are subjective. In addition, most people are not aware of the power that world views have over their behavior: "Mind moves matter." Yet the literature cited in this paper showed that people can become aware of their world views and that they can choose an alternative world view.

Also in this paper, we have developed the argument that public relations cannot be excellent if organizations have a culture that is authoritarian, manipulative, and controlling of others--asymmetrical in its world view of relationships with others. Public relations cannot be excellent if the schema for public relations in the organization (the component of world view related to public relations) conceives of public relations as asymmetrical, in a neutral or advocacy role, and solely technical in nature. Instead, we have said, excellent public relations is based on the world view that public relations is symmetrical, idealistic in its social role, and managerial.

The literature on world view cited earlier in this paper showed that world views can be evaluated on three criteria--their *internal* logic and coherence, their *external* effectiveness in allowing people and organizations to solve problems originating in their environments, and their *ethical* ability to promote "good" or social harmony. On the internal criterion, you as a reader must judge the logic of the world view we have developed here as a characteristic of excellent public relations. For the external criterion, research evidence is mounting that supports the effectiveness of this world view in solving organizational problems. What remains for this paper, then, is a discussion of the ethics of the competing world views.

The Practicality of Idealism

To some practitioners and scholars, the term "idealistic" suggests that the world view we have proposed is impractical, abstract, theoretical, and unrealistic--meanings for the term revealed in a thesaurus. Yet the same thesaurus identifies the words optimistic (positive, confident, promising) and utopian (ideal, model, or exemplary) as alternative meanings for "idealistic." The term "ideal" or "exemplary" captures best what we think is the value of this world view. It serves as a normative standard for ethical public relations--of how it *should be practiced.* Pearson (1989a) developed a theory of public relations ethics based on symmetrical principles, like those articulated in this paper, that he called the "ideal public relations situation." His theory, we believe, supports the contention that the world view of public relations developed in this paper is more ethical than competing world views.

For over a century, philosophers have debated the merits of two types of ethical theories: utilitarian and deontological theories.[8] Utilitarian theories emphasize the practical aspects of behavior--the consequences on others. Deontological theories emphasize formal, universally true principles of what is good or evil.

A utilitarian approach to ethics often runs into trouble because of its relativity. Sometimes behaviors have both positive and negative consequences; and, as Tuleja (1985) put it, "...in calculating the net sum of good and bad in a potential action, I am not likely to be dispassionate and impartial but to weight my own happiness more heavily than that of others" (p. 20). Relativity presents the greatest difficulty when power is not equal. In that case the consequences desired by the powerful get greater weight than consequences on the less powerful (Tuleja, 1985, p. 21).

Consequences on others are important in public relations. J. Grunig and Hunt (1984), for example, said that an organization does not have a public relations problem unless it has consequences on publics or publics have consequences on it. But as we saw above, organizations with great power probably will ignore the consequences of their behaviors on publics unless they react to a moral imperative such as the norm of reciprocity. The norm of reciprocity underlies our symmetrical world view and, we believe, makes that world view inherently ethical.[9]

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[8] For a review of this debate, see Pearson (1989a), Tuleja (1985), or Merrill and Odell (1983).

Asymmetrical public relations can be ethical if its practitioners can show that the consequences of their behavior do not harm people. Practitioners frequently disagree, however, about what actions are ethical when they take an asymmetrical approach. Is it ethical to market cigarettes, for example, or to campaign against gun laws? Should a public relations firm promote the position of the Catholic Church on abortion? Many who practice asymmetrical public relations avoid the question, adopting the presuppositions of the neutral social role or those of the conservative or radical advocacy roles. Most, to borrow the words that Booth (1981) used to describe the practitioners of his Rhetoric-B, "...show themselves to be, in effect, available to the highest bidder: they fail to provide, from within themselves, any hint about limits to how and when their techniques are to be used" (p. 33).

We believe, in contrast, that public relations should be based on a world view that incorporates ethics into the process of public relations rather than on a view that debates the ethics of its outcomes. Such an approach could, for example, set up a dialogue between tobacco companies, smokers, and anti-smoking groups or between religious groups and abortion rights groups. The outcome then must be ethical if all parties participate in making decisions and accept the choice of consequences that are to be sought and those that are to be avoided. Both Cheney and Tompkins (1984) and Pearson (1989a) have developed ethical theories that reflect this symmetrical world view.

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[9] Pearson (1989b) and Pratt (1990) also have argued that symmetrical public relations is inherently ethical.

Burke on Ethics

Cheney and Tompkins (1984) based their ethical theory on Kenneth Burke's concept of "identification"--a "shorthand description of the process of communication."[10] "An ethic of identification," they added, "must account for both explicit and implicit forms of linking one's interests with those of others" (p. 6). Cheney and Tompkins (1984), then, isolated four deontological rules of rhetoric that constitute ethics of what we have called mixed motive, symmetrical communication:

Guardedness. Communicators, or organizations, should not capitulate "willy nilly" to the persuasive demands of others.

Accessibility. Communicators should be open to the possibility of being persuaded for their own benefit.

Nonviolence. We should attempt to persuade rather than to coerce others. In doing so, however, we should not "arouse and solidify hostile feelings nor should we present our view of the world as the single, correct one." (pp. 12-13)

Empathy. We should listen to others as much for our sake as for theirs. We should be "genuinely concerned with the arguments, opinions, values and philosophies of others." (p. 14)

Pearson on Habermas

Pearson (1989a) developed a similar, but more extensive, theory of public relations ethics based in large part on the theories of the German philosopher and rhetorician Jurgen Habermas.[11] In developing his theory of ethics, however, Pearson also used traditional philosophical theories of ethics and psychological theories of moral development--especially those of Kohlberg (1981) and Gilligan (1982).

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[10] For an overview of Burke's rhetorical theory, see Gusfield (1989).

[11] This discussion of Habermas is based on Pearson's discussion of his work. Readers wanting a more detailed understanding of Habermas's work should consult McCarthy (1978) or the translations of several of Habermas's books.

Habermas's theory of ethics rests on his concept of an ideal communication situation--a situation characterized by dialogue and in which participants agree on a system of rules to facilitate that dialogue. These rules constitute the formal, deontological aspects of ethics. According to Pearson (1989a), the following rules apply to each of four communication acts:

Communicatives are communication acts that open lines of communication. As such, they should be *intelligible* to the person to whom they are directed. The communicator should "clarify, offer synonyms, make whatever repetitions are necessary so that a hearer understands, and ...select channels of communication that increase the likelihood of understanding." (p. 235)

Constatives "assert, report, explain, predict, deny, object, or estimate." They "make an implicit claim to truth," and the communicator should support that claim to truth by *providing grounds or reasons.* (p. 236)

Representatives are "expressive speech acts that reveal how a speaker feels." In making such statements, a communicator should *be sincere and show trustworthiness* by behavior "that matches his or her expressed intention." (p. 237)

Regulatives "include orders, commands, requests, admonitions, promises, agreements, and refusals." In making them, the communicator claims that they are *based on valid norms* or on his or her authority and responsibility. The communicator, therefore, must justify these claims by explaining the norms that give the speaker the "conviction" that he or she is right. If the hearer disagrees, the claim should be debated. (p. 237)

Pearson (1989a) explained that people--or organizations and publics--that follow these rules will not always agree on practical decisions when they have different values or different concepts of what is good. That is, they often will not agree on the utilitarian or practical aspect of ethics. People may have mixed motives--the conviction that they are right and the conviction that others should be respected. What is needed is an approach to ethics that combines "moral conviction and tolerance" (Pearson, 1989a, p. 315). When people disagree about what is moral, therefore, they debate and attempt to persuade one another.

In doing so, however, they should follow rules like those of Cheney and Tompkins (1984) that leave them open to persuasion at the same time that they try to persuade others. What is right or wrong, true or false can only be determined through dialogue and agreement and not through the evidence or data provided by one party or one organization. Pearson (1989a, p. 239) said, for example, that the statement that an organization has "advanced minorities into management ranks" can be said to be "true" only when the organization and a representative of a minority public agree that it is true.

Political theorist Bruce Ackerman (1980) has advanced similar principles of openness and dialogue for resolving disputes over right and wrong and truth. Ackerman said that a power holder (such as an organization or management) cannot suppress the claims of someone else to power (such as a public or employees) without giving reasons for doing so--what Ackerman called "rationality" (p. 372). He added that the reasons must be *consistent* from one occasion to another. And, he said, a reason is not a good one if the holder of power asserts that his or her "conception of the good" is better than that of someone else or that he or she is "intrinsically superior to one or more of his (*sic*) fellow citizens" (p. 11). Pearson (1989b) summarized Ackerman's position by saying, "The upshot of this final rule is that an illegitimate claimant to power over scarce resources will be reduced to silence, because he or she will not be able to provide reasons, only unsupportable claims of superior moral insight" (p. 72).

Psychologists such as Kohlberg (1981) have shown that people must advance through several stages of moral development before developing the ability to take others into account by adopting formal rules like the Golden Rule--i.e., before accepting the norm of reciprocity. But Pearson (1989a) added that Habermas and feminist psychologists such as Gilligan (1982) have argued that moral development has one more stage--that of interactive competence or the ability to engage in dialogue. At that stage, people base morality on responsibility rather than on rights and develop a greater sense of interdependence and relationship.

In short, the more ethically developed an individual is--and also an organization--the more he or she uses the concepts of reciprocity and symmetry to decide what is moral (Pearson, 1989a, p. 244.)--twin concepts that are crucial components of the world view developed in this paper.

Pearson (1989a) then developed an ethical theory for public relations based on the following basic premise and two moral imperatives:

> *Basic premise:* Ethics in public relations is not fundamentally a question of whether it is right or wrong to tell the truth, steal clients from one another, accept free lunches or bribes or provide information for insider trading etc. Rather, ethical public relations practice is more fundamentally a question of implementing and maintaining inter-organizational communication systems which question, discuss and validate these and other substantive ethical claims.
>
> *Basic moral imperatives:* 1) It is a moral imperative to establish and maintain communication relationships with all publics affected by organizational action. 2) It is a moral imperative to improve the quality of these communication relationships, that is, to make them increasingly dialogical. More precisely and more concretely this means working toward rule identification, rule clarification and rule change such that measures of organization/public understanding of and agreement on communication rules become increasingly positive.

From an Idealistic to a Positive Normative Theory

In this paper, we believe that we have presented a strong, logical argument supporting the internal validity and ethical superiority of the symmetrical world view articulated here over the asymmetrical world view that pervades public relations. Our world view, like all world views, is normative. It reflects what we and other theorists cited in this paper think *should be*. But, as Massy and Weitz (1977) put it, useful normative theory should provide solutions "under typical conditions encountered in actual practice" (p. 123).

We believe that research has shown and will continue to show that this world view works well in real communication situations as well as ideal situations. Our idealistic world view, in other words, also is an effective, realistic theory.

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"SPILL": USING SOFTWARE SCENARIOS TO TEACH CORPORATE CRISIS COMMUNICATION

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"SPILL": USING SOFTWARE SCENARIOS TO TEACH CORPORATE CRISIS COMMUNICATION

The Problem

The term "crisis" has almost as many definitions as "public relations." This is partly because crises come in many guises. Lerbinger identifies four major types or classes of crises facing business: 1) technological crises caused by human error or side effects in the equipment and processes designed to produce goods and services, 2) confrontational crises caused by actions of government or social action groups, 3) crises of malevolence against the organization, and 4) crises of managerial failure. 1

Regardless of the type of crises being considered, most definitions agree that organizational or corporate crises include the following common elements:

--Surprise

--Lack of sufficient information

--Escalation of events

--Intense scrutiny

--Disruption of operations

--Potential damage to reputation

Reilly encompasses some of these elements in her definition of crisis, but she adds two important factors: crisis demands a timely response, and it is outside the firm's typical operating frameworks. 2

When the word "crisis" is mentioned, events such as natural or man-caused disasters readily come to mind. The most publicized of these have included the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island, The Bhopal chemical leak, the Challenger explosion and the Exxon oil spill. Significantly, these crises quickly proliferated beyond the events themselves to center on social and managerial issues such as administrative competence, personnel screening and training, plant and equipment design, environmental impact, corporate sensitivity, truthfulness and acceptance of responsibility. In every case , perceptions of how well the situations were managed were based heavily on the organizations' ability to communicate effectively with their affected publics, including the news media.

Lukaszewski identifies one factor that often is detrimental to an organization's crisis communication efforts. He comments that "the media tend to focus on mistakes and conflicts made in the process of remedying crisis situations more than on the outcomes." 3 The communication effort may be further thwarted by the actions or reactions of special interest groups in areas of consumer affairs, health, energy, the environment and public policy. According to Lerbinger, "Some confrontations escalate into crises because these groups have learned that the use of crisis-provoking tactics is effective in attracting media and, therefore, management attention." 4

Further exacerbating the communication challenges is the proliferation of technology that has increased the speed and intensity of news media coverage of crises. Live, on-the-spot coverage made possible and economical for even the smallest television news operations by electronic news gathering (ENG) has raised the stakes for organizations, requiring them to take the communication initiative immediately, often well before adequate information is available. While effective media relations are essential in crises, the need for taking the initiative and maintaining control of information necessitates direct communication with key internal and external publics, including employees, union officials, community residents, local emergency response personnel, government regulatory agencies, and many others. Each of these publics require specialized methods of communication and specifically tailored messages.

Given the previously discussed characteristics of crisis and the accompanying challenges, it is clear that crisis communication is a complex area of expertise outside the normal management activities, and beyond the usual day-to-day public relations practice. This means that special training is necessary both in the classroom and on the job. Unfortunately, crisis communication is usually not taught in any depth in most undergraduate public relations programs. Some business schools such as Harvard are teaching crisis communication as part of their management courses, but this is a recent innovation that will take years to filter up to the highest ranks of corporate management.

The oversight in teaching crisis communication in depth in public relations programs may be due to lack of time to add subject matter to the curriculum, or it may have a lot to do with a lack of first-hand expertise on the part of instructors. Further hampering efforts is the lack of adequate textbooks or training materials. In seven years of researching crisis planning, management and communication literature, I have found that most fall into one of several categories: 1) they are too generic or broad brushed to provide more than simplistic recommendations, 2) they are too case specific to provide meaningful recommendations in a wider range of situations, or 3) they are too theoretical to have practical application in a working environment.

The Approach

In an effort to address the deficiencies in crisis communication teaching manifested by lack of time, expertise and materials, I developed a three-part computer software program under a grant from the General Motors Corporation. The program was intended for classroom use, as well as for practitioner training in the field.

Entitled "SPILL," the interactive software program involves a hypothetical gasoline spill at an industrial park located near a major metropolitan area. The scenario is based on an actual crisis occurring at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, in 1986, and it incorporates developments from several more recent oil spills.

The SPILL program was written with CREATE, an IBM-compatible authoring system developed by Associate Professor Wally Trimble of Lehigh University's Department of Journalism, and by students in a software engineering course. The authoring tool allows maximum flexibility in developing different types of role-playing scenarios or problems to be solved. In making decisions or answering questions for SPILL, up to five choices are entered for solving each problem, and for each choice the player is directed to as many as three destinations. Each destination is weighted so the computer makes random choices to increase the spontaneity of the game. The tool allows facts to be given and points to be awarded to the player for making appropriate choices. Conversely, facts are withheld and any number of points are subtracted. A clock is built into the program to allow a pre-determined number of minutes to be expended for solving each problem. This builds time pressure into the scenario.

Using the SPILL software, students or practitioners role play the simulation from the perspective of a public relations practitioner (Dave Johnson), who has been with AMEROIL, a medium-sized oil refining and distribution company, for only a year. Johnson is the only public relations practitioner for corporate headquarters and five regional sales offices, and the company has no crisis plan. At the beginning of SPILL 1, players are given a series of facts about Johnson and his position, the company, the surrounding community, and the news media.

The SPILL software trains its user through interactive questioning, much like a flight simulator teaches a pilot to fly under different circumstances--through trial-and-error learning experiences. During each phase of the scenario, the player must think through various situations and make the most appropriate decisions. The player is faced with several choices, some of which are only subtly different from the other. The player is rewarded with varying numbers of points for better and best choices; points are subtracted for inapprorpiate choices.

In SPILL I, Johnson's office receives a news media call about a reported gasoline spill in an industrial park near a major state highway and shopping mall. Johnson first must deal with the flood of media calls that continue to come into his office. He is challenged to be responsive to media and public needs, but since he knows nothing about the spill at the time of the first call, he also must use his time wisely to ask the right questions of appropriate sources. By role playing Johnson, the student learns to consider what can be released in the initial stages of an emergency without being pressured into communicating unconfirmed or speculative information. She also learns what questions to ask, where to go for information and how to deal with conflicting statements from internal sources. Finally, the player is asked to write an initial statement to be released within an hour of the reported spill, keeping in mind target publics and message objectives.

SPILL II picks up the simulation with the release of the initial statement. A suggested statement is provided, allowing the user to compare with his effort written at the end of SPILL I. The scenario continues with Johnson handling serious misinformation from his own company sources, damaging rumors being disseminated by the news media, and an escalating emergency in terms of public health and safety. The player must make a series of recommendations to his CEO and her management team involving who should be the company spokesperson, the role the CEO should play, and the role of the company attorney. Many of the choices involve making the most persuasive arguments. Issues also are raised about the need to communicate with key publics, such as employees, and the best methods of doing so. Through a series of questions and answers, the user also learns about the need to coordinate communication efforts with community emergency response personnel, who are in charge of evacuation, containment and cleanup. How, where, when and to whom to release subsequent information are taught in the simulation. This phase ends with final arrangements being made for a joint AMEROIL/community emergency coordinator news briefing in mid-afternoon.

SPILL III deals with the preparation, coordination and execution of the news briefing on the first day of the crisis. After working through choices related to planning the event, the actual briefing will be simulated with questions being asked--some of them by hostile reporters--and the player having to select response choices. At this point the user will learn how to deal with a variety of questions, including the faulty premise, either/or, words-in-your mouth, and speculative (what if) questions. The user will learn how to bridge to appropriate message objectives, how to avoid repeating negative statements, and how to make clear and brief statements that will be quotable. At this point, the player also must deal with allegations repeated by the media from an extremist environmental group, and with discoveries that his company was negligent in maintaining its pipelines.

Discussion

In playing through the three parts of SPILL, the user is exposed to all of the elements of a crisis discussed earlier. In addition, the player is faced with three of the four types or classes of crises identified by Lerbinger. By providing such a realistic crisis simulation, the SPILL program provides a method of teaching crisis communication techniques that includes specific decision making while being transferable to a variety of situations.

In addition to the three floppy disks for playing SPILL I-III, an instructor/user manual is provided to explain how to set up and use the system. A separate guidebook on crisis communication is provided for the student, instructor or practitioner to use to review principles before and after playing the scenario. A answer key manual also is available to explain the reasons for the scoring of each of the choices made while playing the scenario. There also are plans to eventually provide interactive disks that will repeat the simulation and respond as choices are made with a discussion of what was the optimum choice and why.

Such a program, with its accompanying instructor's and answer key manuals, supplements instructor expertise and allows for independent use outside the classroom. It is invaluable as a training or review tool for public relations practitioners and mid- and upper-level managers who might be called on to handle communication functions in a crisis. Besides providing a useful checklist to follow for crisis planning, SPILL underscores the time-consuming efforts that are necessitated when basic crisis planning is neglected.

Above all, SPILL demonstrates the variability of crisis situations--there are no hard-and-fast rules in every case. Some answers that might be correct most of the time, are not the best choice in SPILL because of a specific set of circumstances that the player must take into consideration.

(AT THIS POINT IN THE PAPER PRESENTATION, THERE WILL BE A COMPUTER DEMONSTRATION OF SELECTED PORTIONS FROM THE SPILL SOFTWARE)

The following are sample questions and choices from SPILL II:

```
Question number 4
While you were writing and disseminating your statement to the news media,
the CEO's executive secretary contacted local police and fire to find out the
status of the spill.
**********

Choice A: Press (A) and (Return) to find out what he learned.
     Destination (1)    5   (2)    0   (3)    0
     Weight             1          0          0
     Score: 0
     Fact : 4
-------------------------------------------------------------------
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Fact Number 4
This is what the CEO's executive secretary found out from police and fire officials:

At 11:30, officials began evacuating employees of the industrial park in the immediate vicinity of the Spacetech plant along with residents of 75 to 100 homes near the site. However, shortly after this evacuation began, fire officials discovered there is a tank of hydroflouric acid on the Spacetech property, about 100 feet from the spill. Hydroflouric acid is highly toxic and could be dangerous if the gasoline explodes. Based on this information, the fire department has implemented the community emergency management plan, and has ordered an evacuation in a radius of three miles around the spill site. Interstate 100 already has been closed and the airport is being shut down. West Valley Elementary School, the only public building in the area, also has been closed and several hundred children and teachers have been taken to Elder Junior High School, where the Red Cross is setting up a shelter. The West Valley Fire Company Chief has taken charge as emergency coordinator. Authorities also are concerned about the danger to the public from inhaling the gasoline fumes, and about the chance of spontaneous combustion should temperatures rise later in the afternoon.

```
Question number 5
Given the escalation of the oil spill, you have several critical decisions to
make.
**********
What will you decide to do?
**********

Choice A: Stay at headquarters to advise management, and coordinate all
          communication efforts.
      Destination (1)    7   (2)     0   (3)     0
      Weight             1           0           0
      Score: 5
      Fact : 6
Choice B: Go to the Valley Industrial Park to get updated information from
          your cleanup crew, and to deal directly with reporters at the scene.
      Destination (1)    7   (2)     0   (3)     0
      Weight             1           0           0
      Score: -5
      Fact : 5

-------------------------------------------------------------------
```

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Question number 9
While you are walking to the CEO's office you are thinking about the
management meeting.
***********
From your perspective, which goal is most essential to try and achieve at
this meeting?

Choice A: Agreement that the company be absolutely candid about all aspects of
          the incident.
      Destination (1)   11   (2)     0   (3)     0
      Weight             1           0           0
      Score: 5
      Fact : 11
Choice B: Centralization of all communication functions in your public
          relations office.
      Destination (1)   11   (2)     0   (3)     0
      Weight             1           0           0
      Score: 3
      Fact : 11
Choice C: Agreement that you be given complete authority to release to the
          news media whatever information you think is appropriate.
      Destination (1)   11   (2)     0   (3)     0
      Weight             1           0           0
      Score: 0
      Fact : 11

-------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Fact Number 11

Your CEO calls the management meeting to order. Attending are the head of the distribution division, the personnel director, the head of the office of finance, the CEO's chief administrative assistant, the chief of security, the company attorney, the CEO's executive secretary, the director of marketing and the head of maintenance services. The CEO begins the meeting by asking the head of the distribution division to report on the status of the spill. He reports that the pipe responsible for the leak is a 14-inch steel main called a products line pipe. It is used to carry a variety of products including gasoline, heating oil, kerosene or jet fuel. A crew of 12 men, including the field supervisor, are working on the line. They've uncovered a section near the spill that appears to have a horizontal crack in it about 20 inches long. Because of the size of the crack the pipe must be replaced, the head of the distribution division explains. "We'll have to send it to the Breakmore Institute in Oiltown, Ohio, for analysis to see why it cracked. Replacing the pipe will be a problem, however, because we don't know how much residual gasoline is in the pipe. There were about 250,000 gallons before the spill; we estimate at least half of that amount has leaked."

Question number 11

You decide to ask one question of the head of the distribution division.

```
**********
What should it be?
**********

Choice A: Do we have enough men at the scene to handle the repairs and cleanup?
      Destination (1)   12   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 3
      Fact : 12
Choice B: How long will the repairs and cleanup take?
      Destination (1)   13   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 1
      Fact : 13
```

Fact Number 12
The head of the distribution division says there probably are enough men at the scene to handle the repairs. If not, he can always send the second crew that is in the field at the valve shutoff points. As for cleanup, he says we should leave that to the emergency personnel and DER.

The head of maintenance services says he is a little concerned because crews are understaffed in July because of vacations. He says there's no way we can provide much assistance in the cleanup. The personnel director concurs. Some discussion follows.

```
Question number 12
During the discussion you suggest that AMEROIL should have a visible role in
the cleanup, and you recommend hiring an outside contractor.  You give one
persuasive argument to support your view.
**********
Which should it be?
**********


Choice A: It will demonstrate that AMEROIL is a concerned, responsible company.
      Destination (1)   14   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 1
      Fact : 14
Choice B: It will mitigate judgments against the company should any lawsuits
          be filed.
      Destination (1)   16   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 0
      Fact : 15
Choice C: It will lessen the chances that regulatory agencies will come down
          hard on the company in terms of fines and operating restrictions.
      Destination (1)   17   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 0
      Fact : 16
Choice D: It will demonstrate that the company understands the seriousness of
          the situation and is making sincere efforts to mitigate the negative
          effects of the spill.
      Destination (1)   18   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 2
      Fact : 17
Choice E: It will demonstrate that AMEROIL accepts full responsibility for the
          accident and isn't leaving the cost and responsibility of cleanup to
          others.
      Destination (1)   15   (2)    0   (3)    0
      Weight             1          0          0
      Score: 5
      Fact : 18

------------------------------------------------------------------
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Momentum Estimation:
A Methodological Case Study of Perceptions in an Organization

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Abstract

Momentum Estimation:
A Methodological Case Study of Perceptions in an Organization

This methodological case study examines whether it is possible to estimate the momentum of opinions in an organization with a cross-sectional survey. We integrate relevant predictor variables and measures from coorientation research into a model of the spiral of silence theory to estimate opinion shifts about student perceptions of their university's public image of academic quality. More specifically, we examine what predicts opinion, perception of opinion, assessment of future trends and willingness to speak out. The results suggest that at a very applied level the method can provide parsimonious predictors and evidence of the direction of opinion momentum.

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Can a public relations practitioner simply and meaningfully estimate generalizable shifts of opinion momentum about a controversial issue in an organization? This methodological case study applies Noelle-Neumann's conceptualization of the climate of opinion and measures from coorientation research to estimate issue momentum with a large-sample, cross-sectional survey. More specifically, the study measures the various levels of student perceptions of their University's public image of academic quality. The study was spawned by two very pragmatic questions from University officials: can we estimate whether favorable attitudes about academic quality are getting stronger among the students, and what predicts this favorable momentum? Research indicated that the students were a primary source of information and attitudes about the University's public image of academic quality for "outside" publics, i.e., the students were a key "sales force" for the University's public image. We measured the climate of opinion about academic quality to determine the predictors and direction of opinion momentum about the issue of academic quality. This was the first step to develop an effective public relations program targeted at this "image sales force" that would ultimately enhance the University's public image of academic quality.

The Issue: The University and Academic Quality

The University is a regional southeastern university with 16,000 students in a large state university system. The University traditionally ranks third on most measures used to categorize the system's universities. The University also has had the dubious distinction of being regarded as a "party school." This distinction has two sources: Playboy magazine's annual rating of the best party schools and a now-extinct annual Halloween party, which had long been a tradition that annually drew an estimated 40,000 "guests," including students from the region and from the state's other universities and which students still equate Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

Beginning in 1988, the University's new chancellor attempted to chart a new course for the University as a leading research institution in the state and in the region. In August 1988 the chancellor appointed a task force to study perceptions of the University and to direct changes to improve the University's academic image. A qualitative study of 271 faculty, staff, students, alumni and city residents indicated the following: 1) the University did not have a strong academic image; 2) the University was perceived as a friendly, community-oriented campus with a strong "party-school" atmosphere; 3) the University's students were instrumental in transmitting the University's public image; and 4) the respondents wanted the University to be given the academic respect that they thought it deserved.

The task force examined the students' perceptions of the University with telephone surveys in 1989 and 1990. The 1989 survey indicated that 38 percent of the students did not have a favorable opinion of the University's public image, and the 1990 study indicated that 32 percent of the students did not have a favorable opinion of the University's public image of academic quality.[1] In both years, student opinion of public image varied significantly with whether the University was the students' first choice when applying to universities and with the distance of the student's hometown from the University, i.e., those who selected the University as their first choice and who lived close to the University tended to have more favorable opinions of the University's public image.

The University initiated three programs: 1) it developed a new graphic identity system to reflect a positive academic image; 2) it instituted more thorough admissions procedures; and 3) it developed several doctoral degrees. These programs appeared to enhance the University's image. In 1990 The Chronicle of Higher Education rated the University as one of the two universities "on the move" in the state, and U.S. News & World Report rated the University as one of the top 15 regional universities in the Southeast. And, the entering students' SAT scores have risen each year since 1989.

In Fall 1989 and Summer 1990 the task force conducted focus groups with high school students from throughout the state. The focus groups indicated that prospective students use three primary sources to secure information about a university: students from the university, university promotional materials and high school guidance counselors. The University developed new promotional materials for prospective students and guidance counselors. These promote the University's position about excellence of academic quality. Given the importance of the current students as an "image sales force," the task force wanted to know whether whether favorable attitudes about academic quality were becoming stronger among the students and, if so, what would predict this favorable momentum. This study, based upon a Spring 1991 telephone survey of students, attempts to address these questions.

The Spiral of Silence and the Climate of Opinion: A Theoretical Model

The theoretical foundation for this methodological case study is Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Theory, which is typically used to analyze public opinion formation about controversial and morally loaded issues in the general public. "Pressure to conform" is at the heart of Noelle-Neumann's definition of public opinion and the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989). Drawing upon qualitative concepts from de Tocqueville, Locke and Rousseau and the empirical findings of Asch (1951), she argues that individuals fear isolation from the majority and thus conform to what they perceive to be the dominant opinion (Perception of Opinion ⇒ Opinion). The fear of isolation hypothesis, and the theory in general, are dependent on the conditions of publicness -- speaking coram publico, before the public eye -- and strongly controversial, morally loaded topics. (Noelle-Neumann, 1989, p. 12; Donsbach and Stevenson, 1984). To avoid isolation, individuals scan the environment to determine the shifting tide of opinion through "quasi-statistical perceptions" (1984, p. 116). If individuals hold the dominant opinion, or think they hold the dominant opinion, or think they will hold the dominant opinion in the future, they tend to engage in more public communication of this dominant opinion, thus changing the climate of opinion by this "speaking out" (Merten, 1985, p. 32). Scholars question whether individuals can accurately gauge majority opinion, and suggest that one's opinion actually leads to one's perception of opinion. This relationship (Opinion ⇒ Perception of Opinion), which is the reverse of Noelle-Neumann's conformity hypothesis, is termed the projection hypothesis (Salmon and Kline, 1985; Glynn and McLeod, 1985; Taylor, 1982). Noelle-Neumann counters that the quasi-statistical sense has been interpreted as the ability to correctly assess actual majority and minority opinion, but "no such ability exists ... there is an ability to reliably perceive an increase or decrease in attitudes, which coincides with actual developments in attitudes" (1989, p. 21).

Noelle-Neumann suggests individuals make judgments about increases or decreases in attitudes from two sources: direct observation and the trend-setting media. These two forms of observation may result in a gap in perception, which Noelle-Neumann terms the "dual climate of opinion" (1989). Persons who have high exposure to "the media take a different view of the climate of opinion and of where the majority is to be found than persons who do not have much exposure to the media and essentially depend on their immediate observations " (p. 21). This process provides an indication of the power of the mass media "to shape the climate of opinion and to influence behavior -- speaking up or keeping silent -- in controversial situations" (p. 21).

The heart of the spiral of silence model is the perception of majority opinion: "It is an individual's perception of what constitutes majority opinion which is important rather than the actual distribution of opinion as reported by a public opinion poll" (Salmon and Kline, 1985, p. 21). It is not possible to infer that an individual is responding to majority influence without knowing whether the individual thinks he or she is in the majority or minority. Therefore individual opinion must be compared with one's perception of majority opinion (p. 21).

Taylor (1982) is one of the few scholars to present a model of the spiral of silence, which includes four key variables (Figure 1): one's opinion of an issue; one's perception of the predominant public opinion; one's assessment of the likely future course of public opinion; and one's willingness to support one's opinion with action, verbal statements, or other signs of commitment (p. 314).

Figure 1 About Here

The model portrays the causal ordering of the variables. One's opinion and one's assessment of the predominant public opinion are assumed to be related. While the theory is concerned primarily with other factors and assumes the conformity hypothesis (Perception of Opinion ⇒ Opinion), others address the issue of projection effects (Opinion ⇒ Perception of Opinion). Fields and Schuman (1976) discuss the process in which A simply projects his or her opinion onto B: "The dominant pattern (in the process underlying public beliefs about others' attitudes) is the "looking glass perception -- the belief that others think the same as oneself. In the absence of strong counter-forces, a large proportion of people feel that the world they live in agrees with their own opinions on public issues " (p. 445). O'Gorman (1975, 1979, 1980; O'Gorman and Garry, 1976) use the term "pluralistic ignorance" to describe the situation when a minority position in public opinion is incorrectly perceived to be the majority position, and vice versa. Taylor (1982) concludes "empirical studies of pluralistic ignorance have usually ended up testing whether or not the majority correctly perceives the majority position (p. 312). Scherer (1991) examined both processes, conformity and projection, in a panel study and concluded that projection effects offered a better explanation of the relationship between the variables than conformity.

Taylor (1982) suggests that one's opinion and one's assessment of the predominant opinion are both assumed to influence one's judgment of the future course of public opinion. One's willingness to express one's opinion depends on an interaction between one's opinion (majority or minority) and one's perception of the future trend in public opinion (pp. 315-316). "For those who favor the majority position, willingness to express one's opinion is greater for those who see a trend toward greater public support for that position. For those who favor the minority position, willingness to express oneself is greater for those who see a trend toward the minority position" (p. 316). This implies an interaction between variables 1, 3 and 4; however, the model does not specify a similar interaction between variables 1, 2 and 4 because "according to the theory, one's perception of the predominant opinion affects one's assessment of the future trend, but does not directly affect one's willingness to support one's position" (p. 316).

Coorientation and the Climate of Opinion

McLeod and Chaffee's (1973) coorientation model has been used to examine the climate of opinion for public relations issues. Broom (1977) recommends the application of coorientation measures and suggest these measures can be used to identify corporate-public relationship problems, develop communication messages and programs to correct corporate-public relationship problems, and assess the impact of public relations efforts. Grunig and Stamm (1973) provide a summary of coorientation research, citing many examples of its use for public relations problems. Hesse (1976) indicates its effectiveness for measuring political public relations issues, and Tichenor and Wackman (1973) suggest its usefulness in examining the extent to which agreement on a particular kind of community issue is related to exposure to different kinds of media content.

McLeod and Chaffee's (1973) coorientation model is derived from Newcomb's ABX symmetry model (1953) and is based on "the assumption that a person's behavior is not simply the product of his private cognitive construction of the world; it is also a function of his or her perception of the orientations held by others around him or her and of his or her orientation to them with regard for the same world" (McLeod and

Chaffee, 1973, p. 13). The model's concept of accuracy (Figure 2) is "a measure of the match between a person's perception of another's opinion and that person's actual opinion," and accuracy is significantly related to incidence of communication -- the more a person communicates with others in the environment, the more likely he or she is to describe accurately those others' opinions (p. 13).

Figure 2 About Here

The coorientation model has three key underlying assumptions: people's behavior is a function of their perceptions of the orientations held by others around them and of their orientation to them; under certain conditions of interaction, the actual cognitions and perceptions of others will also affect their behavior; and, it is possible to assume that the small social system functions partly as a unit, on the basis of intercognitive relations within it, without the individual members necessarily being aware of these factors. (McLeod and Chaffee, 1973). A set of data must meet three basic requirements if social reality is to become a research concept: an assessment of the person's frame of reference, a comparable assessment of others within his social system, and a correspondence between the first and second sets of data to provide an estimate of the social derivation of the person's cognitive structure (Chaffee and McLeod, 1972). Three separate variables can be constructed from comparisons among these sets of cognitions: congruency, the extent that the person thinks the other's opinions resemble his or her own (congruency is not considered to be a true coorientational concept because it is a cognitive construct private to one of the two persons and as a "within-the-person" variable, it varies with many internal cognitive processes including rationalization, projection and selective perception); agreement, the extent that one person's evaluations resemble the others; and accuracy, the extent that one person's perceptions of the other's evaluations resembles the other's true evaluations (Chaffee and McLeod, 1968).

While the major focus of coorientation is interpersonal communication, the perception of opinions of large groups, which is more applicable to the study of the spiral of silence theory and this study, is also examined in this study. This process is termed "reification," or how the individual reacts to the group as a "generalized other" (Chaffee and McLeod, 1972). These 'generalized others" must meet two criteria: they must be psychologically meaningful to the population under study and "they must suggest boundaries for the groups such that the researcher can tell objectively who should be included and who should not" (p. 67). Reification should be cognitively operative for the persons who are coorienting: "If there is an empirical basis for inferring (1) that the necessary conditions of coorientation are met and (2) that the person is cooriented with a collectivity of more than one other person, then the assumption may be admissible" (p. 67). Two measures of judgments are appropriate: group reification might be indexed by asking each person to estimate the proportion of people in the group holding each position or, as recommended by Berger and Luckmann (1966), reification may be treated as an either-or phenomenon -- something is either real or it is not for a given person (Chaffee and McLeod, 1972, p. 66).[2]

In the reification adaptation to the coorientation model, most studies examine the relationship of two groups (Hesse, 1976; Tichenor and Wackman,1973). In these studies, measures are taken of the two separate groups and then the groups are compared with the coorientation measures. However, our use of coorientation measures in the spiral of silence examines the relationship of group members to the group (survey respondents to the "generalized other" of the student population majority). Thus for our purposes, the coorientation measures of congruency and accuracy are most relevant. We term an individual's estimation of majority support subjective agreement, which is equivalent to congruency and the spiral of silence's concept of perception of predominant opinion, and accuracy of this perception is termed objective accuracy to differentiate it from accuracy (Figure 2).

A key issue for reification is how do people secure estimates of the climate of opinion. At the interpersonal level, McLeod and Chaffee (1973) "presume that it will be extremely rare for both A and B to perceive exactly the same elements of X ... but some degree of similarity in their orientations toward X is necessary in order to apply the model sensibly at the operational level" (p. 494). While it may be rare to achieve this simultaneity at the interpersonal level, Noelle-Neumann turns to the agenda-setting function of the media to relay "the urgency and chances of success for the various opinions" (Salmon and Kline, 1985, p. 5; McCombs and Shaw, 1977; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). McLeod and Chaffee (1973) argue that "a person will likely be accurate in assessing dominant opinion in one of his or her groups with which he or she has frequent contact but may be inaccurate in assessing dominant opinion of some amorphous public with which he or she has little contact" (p. 13). However, Tichenor and Wackman (1973) suggest that the media fulfill the function of providing information about the "real" state of public opinion, substituting for group influence in the public opinion formation.

Research Questions and Measures

This study incorporates three predictor variables and the reification measures of subjective agreement and objective accuracy in a test of an adaptation of Taylor's spiral of silence model to determine the predictors and direction of opinion momentum regarding the students' attitudes about academic quality . We specifically address five research questions.

What Predicts Opinion?

Model 1: Opinion = Subjective Agreement + Choice + Distance + Attention

The dependent variable for this question is the respondent's opinion about the University's public image of academic quality (Opinion; Table 1). Taylor (1982) states that perception of opinion is related to opinion and Scherer (1991) suggests this prediction indicates conformity of opinion to majority opinion. We incorporate subjective agreement and three control variables to predict opinion.

Table 1 About Here

Regarding the control variables, prior research indicated that the students' selection of the University as their first choice of universities (Choice; Table 2) and the distance of their hometown from the University (Distance; Table 2) were significantly related to a positive public image of the University. Noelle-Neumann and McCombs and Shaw (1977, 1972) suggest that those who pay attention to the media may have different opinions or agendas than those who do not. A focus group conducted prior to the survey indicated that students could not delineate the sources they used for information about the University's academic quality. Therefore, we simply measured how much attention they paid to reports about the University's academic quality (Attention; Table 2).

Table 2 About Here

What Predicts Subjective Agreement?

Model 2: Subjective Agreement = Opinion + Choice + Distance + Attention

The dependent variable for Model 2 is the reification measure of subjective agreement -- does the respondent think the majority of students agree or disagree with his or her opinion about the University's public image of academic quality (Subjective Agreement; Table 1). This model examines Taylor's first link, but the prediction is the reverse of Model 1, thus examining the issue of pluralistic ignorance -- does opinion predict perception? As in Model 1, we also include the control variables of choice, distance and attention.

What Predicts Objective Accuracy?

Model 3: Objective Accuracy = Choice + Distance + Attention

The measure of objective accuracy offers a slight modification to Taylor's model. Most spiral of silence research only includes a measure of subjective perception of predominant opinion. In this analysis, we also wanted to measure and control for the effects of being objectively accurate about majority opinion to determine if the climate of opinion was simply a matter of subjective appraisal of opinion or if it was controlled by accuracy of opinion.

The reification measure of objective accuracy is developed from a combination of opinion and subjective agreement (Objective Accuracy; Table 1). If the respondent thought the University had a positive public image (the majority) and the respondent thought he or she was of the majority opinion, or if the respondent thought the University had a negative public image (the minority) and the respondent thought he or she was of the minority opinion, then the respondent was objectively accurate. If the respondent thought the University had a negative public image and the respondent thought he or she was of the majority opinion, or if the respondent thought the University had a positive public image and the respondent thought he or she was of the minority opinion, then the respondent was objectively inaccurate.

In terms of Taylor's model, objective accuracy offers another option for perception of opinion, but since it is created from opinion and subjective agreement it cannot be tested in relation to opinion, as we did with subjective agreement in Model 2. Rather, objective accuracy is the first element in an alternative path for the model: objective accuracy predicts opinion change which then predicts speaking out (Figure 1). Before examining its effect in relation to position change and speaking out we first examine whether it is predicted by choice, distance and attention.

What Predicts Assessment of Future Trend

Model 4: Position Change = Opinion + Subjective Agreement + Objective Accuracy + Choice + Distance + Attention

The dependent variable for Model 4 (Position Change) measures whether the respondent thinks his or her opinion about the public image of academic quality is gaining strength or losing strength. Taylor postulates that one's opinion and one's assessment of predominant opinion are both assumed to influence one's judgment of the future course of public opinion, that is those in the majority who think the majority agree with their opinion think their position is gaining strength, while those in the minority who think the majority disagree with their opinion think their position is losing strength. We add objective accuracy to this equation to determine the role of accuracy in the perceptions of the future course of events, and we again include choice, distance and attention as control variables.

What Predicts Speaking Out?

Model 5: Speaking Out = Position Change + Opinion + Subjective Agreement + Objective Accuracy + Choice + Distance + Attention

The dependent variable for Model 5, speaking out, measures whether the respondents would be willing publicly to discuss their opinion about the University's public image of academic quality with other students (Speaking Out; Table 1). Taylor suggests that for those who favor the majority position, willingness to express an opinion is greater for those who see a trend toward greater public support for their position; for those who favor the minority position, willingness to express an opinion is greater for those who see a trend toward the minority position. Thus, we include opinion, subjective agreement and position change as independent variables, and we also include objective accuracy to determine if there is a relationship between accuracy of perception and speaking out. As in the other models, we also include the control variables of choice, distance and attention.

Method

The data for this study were from a telephone survey of 568 University students conducted in February 1991 by members of a public relations class for the University's image task force. Student names and phone numbers were systematically generated from the University's Spring 1991 registration list (Kish, 1965, p. 118). The specific student was contacted to avoid problems of more than one person living in a dormitory room or an apartment. The survey completion rate was 54%, with 31 refusals, 100 non-eligible respondents, 25 terminated by respondents and 324 uncompleted calls (uncompleted call-backs, busy, answering machines, no answers). The sample gender distribution (60% female and 40 male%) was within 3% of the University population gender distribution for the Spring 1991 semester. In 95 out of 100 such samples, the results should differ by no more than 4% points from what would have been obtained if every number in the population had been dialed.

Statistical Analysis: The Logit Model

The dependent variables were all treated as dichotomous variables, i.e., the "don't know" responses were excluded, in order to use the probit procedure with the logistic model specification in SAS PC+; the independent variables were also treated as categorical variables. This dichotomous treatment of the dependent variables with logit models was driven by two concerns: the spiral of silence's treatment of majority opinion, i.e., majority/non-majority; and, the use of Berger and Luckmann's conceptualization of the reification process as an either/or situation. The treatment provided for a parsimonious interpretation (if not A, then B), yet it did so at the expense of explaining some variance, most specifically the role of those who respond "don't know."

We examined three statistics in the models. The first, the goodness of fit of the model, was based upon a chi-square value produced from a contrasts of the intercept model versus the full model (Aldridge and Nelson, 1984, p. 55).[3] The second was the coefficient estimates. If the estimate was determined to be a statistically significant contributor to the model, we examined its value: the effect of a change in X_k on the probability of response $Y=1$ is related to, though not completely determined by b_k; the sign of b_k determines the direction of effect and the effect tends to be large if b_k is large (p. 43). The third was the odds ratio. Since the model specification of the logit model is a sigmoid curve, it is difficult to assess the overall effect of the beta. Thus, it is sometimes better to focus on the ratio of probabilities rather than the probability. We took the antilog of the estimate to determine this odds ratio. It is easiest to think of this ratio as follows: Controlling for everything else, a unit increase in X would multiply the odds of the outcome of Y_1 by some factor (p. 47).

It is important to emphasize that the logit models do not address the issue of causality (Scherer, 1991; Donsbach and Stevenson, 1984; Salmon and Kline, 1985; Glynn and McLeod, 1985; Taylor, 1982). At a theoretical level, the spiral of silence is a broad-based examination of public opinion encompassing behavioral/attitudinal, communication and social theory and, as such, there is no empirical investigation -- even by Noelle-Neumann -- in which all of the connections between variables have been tested in on empirical test (Donsbach and Stevenson, 1984). At an applied, pragmatic level, we are attempting to estimate opinion momentum with a relatively simple, inexpensive, one-shot, cross-sectional survey. We hope to present a simple methodology that an "average" public relations research practitioner can (and will) use, understand and afford.

Results

At a descriptive level, the results (Table 1) indicate that positive opinion is the majority opinion (56%) and negative opinion is the minority opinion (44%). Table 1 also indicates that 86% of the respondents think the majority agree with their opinion, thus suggesting a "looking-glass effect." In regard to objective accuracy, accuracy (56%) and inaccuracy (44%) appear to be a matter of chance. Thinking one's position is gaining strength comprises 71% of the sample, while only 29% view their position as losing strength. And, a large majority (75%) indicate a willingness to speak publicly with other students about their opinion.

The results from the five models suggest that at a theoretical level the key spiral of silence variables do not significantly predict most of Taylor's postulated links: perception of opinion does not predict opinion; opinion does not predict perception of opinion; perception of opinion does not predict opinion; perception of opinion is not related to assessment of future trend, though opinion is related to future assessment; and opinion and assessment of future trend are not related to speaking out. Second, the reification measures predict nothing and nothing predicts the reification measures. Yet, at an applied level, the results suggest a very important finding about the University's "agenda" and students' attention to the "agenda": attention, when controlled for other key variables in the climate of opinion, appears to be an extremely strong predictor of the climate of opinion.

Table 3 About Here

In Model 1 (What Predicts Opinion), paying a great deal of attention to information about academic quality strongly predicts a positive public image of academic quality, multiplying the odds of a positive response by 1.97. Paying quite a bit of attention also is significantly related to a positive response, multiplying the odds by 1.84. The results suggest that paying attention to information about academic quality, when controlled for choice and distance, significantly enhances the odds of having a positive response to the University's public image of academic quality. This implies that vital information for such an opinion is available to the students; the key is to motivate them to seek and process the information.

With regard to Model 2 (Predicting Subjective Agreement), nothing predicts this "looking glass" effect and, as seen in the other models, subjective agreement predicts nothing. These findings strongly counter Taylor's model and other findings about the importance of the role of perception of opinion (Stevenson and Gonzenbach, 1990). It should be noted that attention was related to subjective agreement (high attention predicted agreement), but it was only significant at .08.

Model 3 (Predicting Objective Accuracy) also indicates that nothing predicts objective accuracy and, as indicated in the other models, objective accuracy predicts nothing. This result supports other findings about the limited role of accuracy in the opinion formation process (Stevenson and Gonzenbach, 1990).

Taylor postulates that assessment of future trend will be predicted by opinion and assessment of predominant opinion; however Model 4 (Predicting Position Change) indicated that opinion, and not assessment of predominant opinion, predicted position change. A positive image of academic quality significantly multiplied the odds of viewing one's position as gaining strength by 13.20. This offers encouraging news for the University in that those who have a positive image (the slight majority) strongly believe their opinion is gaining strength, thus offering the prospect for a very positive momentum shift for the vision of academic quality at the University. Model 1 also indicates that positive opinion is strongly predicted by attention to information about academic quality. Thus, the results of Model 1 and Model 4 imply that motivating students to pay attention to the academic quality "success story," as typified by the articles in the Chronicle and US News & World Report, can lead to positive opinion, which in turn leads to a belief that this vision of the University is gaining strength.

Finally, Taylor suggests that willingness to speak out is directly predicted by opinion and assessment of future trend; Model 5 (Predicting Speaking Out) indicates that attention is again the vital predictor. Paying a great deal of attention significantly multiplies the odds of speaking out by 3.22, and paying quite a bit of attention significantly multiplies the odds of speaking out by 2.18. Thus, paying attention appears to be the key to initiating positive discussion about academic quality, which according to the spiral of silence will generate a thrust of momentum in the direction the University wishes student public opinion to move.

Figure 3 About Here

In summation, prior research indicated the students are a primary "sales force" for the University's public image. The study's results indicated that motivating the students to pay attention to information about academic quality was a key to developing positive momentum for the University's vision of academic quality. High attention significantly predicted positive opinion; high attention mildly predicted subjective agreement (though only significant at .08); positive opinion, which was predicted by high attention, significantly and dramatically predicted a view that positive opinion was gaining strength; and, high attention significantly predicted willingness to speak out, which theoretically should create a momentum shift to a positive vision to the University's public image of academic quality (Figure 3). Thus, the results pose a very simple question for the University's public relations efforts: how can the University motivate students to pay attention to the success stories of academic quality? The answer to this question should be a vital element of the University's objective of creating a public image of academic quality.

Discussion

This analysis is a case study that attempts to estimate opinion momentum about a controversial issue with a cross-sectional survey that incorporates theoretical concepts and measurements from the spiral of silence and coorientation (reification) research. Our objective is to determine a specific answer to a very applied, pragmatic question, and not to support/refute a test of a theory. The results suggest that the methodology offers a parsimonious way to glean important information about the predictors and direction of the climate of opinion in a large organization; however, the study possesses several methodological limitations.

In regard to the current research project, this analysis should be followed up with a market segmentation study to determine what variables predict high attention. These variables should then be used to target an information campaign to increase attention levels. Second, future studies should attempt to incorporate a panel design which would address the causal nature of the relationship over time (Scherer, 1990). While this cross-sectional study points to important answers, it does suffer from limitations about the causal direction of the relationships. At a very pragmatic level though, it is often difficult to secure the funds and time to implement a panel study. This study suggests that a cross-sectional study, while limited, can provide important information about the predictors and possible direction of attitude change for those with limited budgets and time. Third, unlike most coorientation studies, this application of reification measures circumvents the need to measure two publics and to determine how they are coorienting; we simply examine how the respondents are reifying with the "generalized other" of students. This simple and less expensive application of reification measures was possible because prior research indicated that the students were the key "sales force" for the university. Yet, this limited application of reification measures should only be the first phase of an analysis of the organizational climate of opinion. Future research should also examine the coorientational relationship between the students and faculty, the students and the community, and possibly the students and the state residents. As an example, a survey of state residents should be implemented to determine their opinion of the University's public image of academic quality. Then, the student survey should examine the reification process between the students and the public opinion of the state residents, i.e., do you think the majority of the state residents agree with your opinion, do you think your opinion is gaining strength among the majority of state residents, would you be willing to publicly discuss your opinion with state residents. In this application, the expansion of the analysis to other publics would provide additional information about how the student "sales force" might react to and with other primary publics for the University.

Finally, we address the the lack of support presented in this analysis for the theoretical relationships predicted by Taylor regarding the spiral of silence. We suggest that the issue of academic quality is a controversial and morally loaded issue at the University, as required by the spiral of silence. We believe the controversial nature of the issue is indicated by the very regular debate about the issue in the student media and by the faculty in class and at public meetings. The element of controversy is also indicated in the clear split of opinion about public image of academic quality; 44% don't believe the University has a positive public image. We based our decision about the morally loaded element of the issue upon the findings from focus groups with University students. As the study indicates, 43% of the students who attend the University chose the University as their second choice. The focus groups indicated that many of these "second choice" students felt badly about themselves as students and about the academic quality of the University -- "I was rejected everywhere else, but I got in here." The lack of spiral of silence results may be related to the possibility that this issue is not as controversial and morally loaded as we believed. Yet, the study also indicates that while the spiral of silence relationships are not significant, the methodology parsimoniously points to important, pragmatic predictor variables and their relationship to the direction of opinion change. Given our public relations objective, we believe this is an important finding.

Conclusion

This case study application of the spiral of silence and reification suggests that the measurement of the organizational climate of opinion can provide parsimonious predictors and evidence of the direction of opinion momentum with a cross-sectional survey. Though this method does not address the issue of causality like a panel design, it does provide a less expensive and quick method to examine the organizational climate of opinion. This method appears to offer an important first step and tool for public relations practitioners to estimate the shifting tides of opinions so vital to the success and failure of organizations.

Notes

1. The 1989 and 1990 surveys asked the following question about the University's public image: "What is your opinion of the University's public image -- very favorable, somewhat favorable, not very favorable, or not favorable at all?" This question does not specifically examine the issue of opinion of academic quality, which is the thrust of this study. The question was changed in the 1991 survey, as indicated in Table 1.

2. An examination of reification to a "generalized other" -- in this case the majority of students -- presents some demanding methodological requirements. We assumed that the opinion of other students was meaningful to the students based upon student responses in the focus groups. Second, we determined that the respondents were, to a degree, coorienting with other students in that 95% of the respondents had an opinion about subjective agreement (See Table 1). Third, regarding the issue of boundaries, we assumed that the University suggested boundaries from which we could objectively determine who should be included.

3. The goodness of fit statistics for the six models were as follows: Model 1 X^2 (4, N=521) = 59.68, p<.001; Model 2 X^2 (4, N=521) = 16.92, p<.01; Model 3 X^2 (3, N=526) = 16.29, p<.01; Model 4 X^2 (5, N=487) = 193.51, p<.001; Model 5 X^2 (6, N=471) = 126.48, p<.001.

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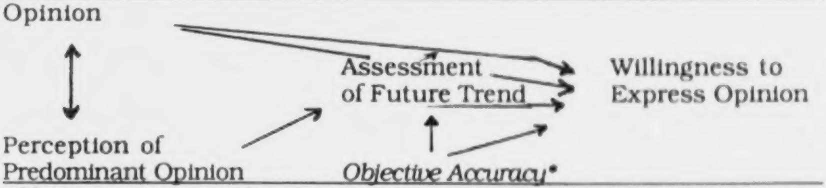
Figure 1. Taylor's Spiral of Silence Model


Opinion
Assessment of Future Trend
Willingness to Express Opinion
Perception of Predominant Opinion
*Objective Accuracy**

*Objective Accuracy has been added to Taylor's model

Figure 2. McLeod and Chaffee's Coorientation Model and Test Reification Model

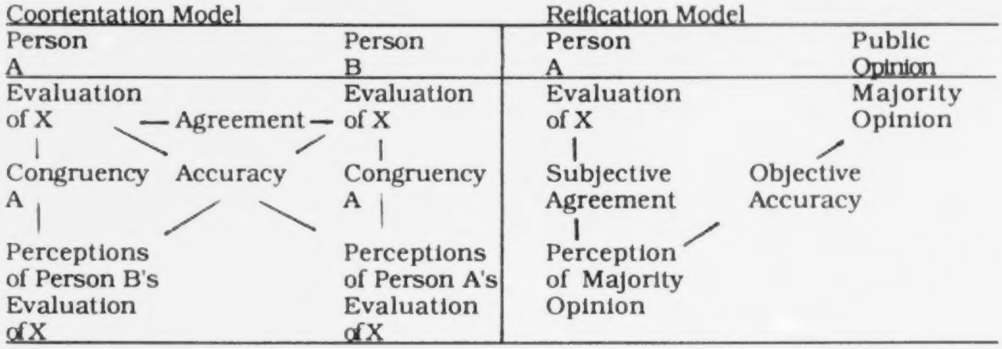

Coorientation Model
Reification Model
Person A
Person B
Person A
Public Opinion
Evaluation of X
Agreement
Evaluation of X
Evaluation of X
Majority Opinion
Congruency A
Accuracy
Congruency A
Subjective Agreement
Objective Accuracy
Perceptions of Person B's Evaluation of X
Perceptions of Person A's Evaluation of X
Perception of Majority Opinion

Table 1. Responses for Dependent Measures

Variable	%
Model 1. Opinion[a]	
n=550	
Positive	56
Negative	44
Model 2. Subjective Agreement[b]	
n=541	
Agree	86
Disagree	14
Model 3. Objective Accuracy[c]	
n=526	
Accurate	56
Inaccurate	44
Model 4. Position Change[d]	
n=513	
Gaining Strength	71
Losing Strength	29
Model 5. Speak Out[e]	
n=548	
Yes	75
No	25

a What is your opinion of the University's public image of academic quality, is it generally positive or negative?

b Do you think the majority of students at the University agree or disagree with your opinion about the University's public image of academic quality?

c Based upon a crosstabulation of Subjective Agreement by Opinion

d Do you think your opinion about the University's public image of academic quality is gaining strength or losing strength among other University students?

e Would you be willing to publicly discuss your opinion about the University's public image of academic quality with other University students?

Table 2. Responses for Independent Measures

Variable	%
Choice[a]	
n=568	
Yes	57
No	43
Distance[b]	
n=568	
>150 Miles	32
51-150 Miles	41
<=50 Miles	27
Attention[c]	
n=568	
A Great Deal	22
Quite a Bit	46
Only a Little	32

a Was the University your first choice when you applied to universities for your collegiate or graduate education?
b Approximately how far is your hometown from the University?
c How much attention do you pay to information about the academic quality of the University. A great deal, quite a bit, only a little, none at all? (Note: 2% responded "none at all." This category was combined with 30% who responded "only a little."

Table 3. Summary of Logit Models

Variable	Estimate	SE	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Model 1. Opinion					
Attention			10.77	.005	
A Great Deal	.68	.25	7.45	.006	1.97
Quite a Bit	.61	.21	8.57	.003	1.84
Only a Little	0	0			
Model 4. Position Change					
Opinion	2.58	.38	45.24	.000	13.20
Model 5. Speak Out					
Attention			15.74	.000	
A Great Deal	1.17	.34	12.21	.000	3.22
Quite a Bit	.78	.25	9.76	.000	2.18
Only a Little	0	0			

Figure 3. Summary of Relationships in Test Models

Opinion	Subjective Agreement	Objective Accuracy	Position Change	Speak Out
Majority	Agree	Accurate	Gaining	Yes
|	|		|	|
Attention	Attention*	None	Opinion	Attention
|	|		|	|
Minority	Don't Agree	Inaccurate	Losing	No

*Only significant at .08 level

RISK MESSAGES FOR THE REBEL:

HYPOTHESES FROM FOUR FOCUS GROUPS

by

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ABSTRACT

RISK MESSAGES FOR THE REBEL: HYPOTHESES FROM FOUR FOCUS GROUPS

A survey of 307 individuals, followed by focus groups with those identified in the survey as rebellious, generated new hypotheses about successful risk messages for rebels. Rebels want the full complexity of the facts from unbiased sources. Anti-smoking or drinking messages should acknowledge the linkages rebels make between smoking and drinking. Messages should be active, vibrant and shocking with "real" people rather than actors, or with "wacky, superhuman" cartoon characters. Messages to rebels should show appreciation for the Rebel's tendency to see himself or herself as bold, creative, in control, and thoughtful rule challengers. The authors offer hypotheses for future testing.

Presented to Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, Boston, MA, August 8, 1991.

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The public relations professional of the nineties will often find herself or himself communicating about risk: risk to the environment, risk to the health of employees or of the public, or risk to the organization's stockholders. Much of the risk communication literature spells out guidelines and principles for message design for a general public, assumed to be relatively risk aversive (Sandman, 1991, Covello, 1990). These guidelines, which include using simple, non-technical language; enumerating specific actions to be taken; presenting the different sides of an issue; and balancing messages to generate appropriate levels of fear or anxiety, are appropriate for those who are risk aversive, but not for an audience of risk takers.

Risk takers are different from those who are risk aversive. Keinan et al., (1984) based on a review of the literature, proposed that risk takers need stimulation and seek change, novelty, and adventure; are characterized by a high level of activity, energy, and dynamism; have difficulty controlling impulses; need to demonstrate independent thinking and actions, and an ability to solve their problems; do not like norms or rules that restrict their personal freedom; do not like long-term planning; and prefer to respond to the situation rather than earlier commitments. Lasorsa and Shoemaker (1988) found, for example, that a "risky" attitude accounts for nearly 13 percent of the variance in risk for AIDS.

This paper begins with an assumption that getting the right message about potential risks through the right channel from the right source requires penetrating understanding of the message receivers. We need to know what motivates people to take risks.

An Individual Difference Perspective on Risk Taking

One question of interest is: How do individual differences affect approaches to risk taking? For example, some risk takers appear to be rebellious in their risk taking while other risk takers approach risk with a sense of adventure. Ferguson and Valenti (1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1991) have taken an individual difference perspective on the risk taker where a risk taking predisposition is defined as a general tendency to engage in behaviors the actor understands to have some likelihood of resulting in punishment or loss of reward or other negative consequences. There are many possible motives for risk taking: the perceived likelihood that risk taking will result in a reward, the social approval received from those who give attention to the risk taker, a general and perhaps learned orientation toward uncertainty, a biochemical need for sensation, or a need to maintain a sense of control over one's environment or identity by attributing risky behaviors to chance or impulse.

Other researchers have developed constructs similar to or perhaps leading to risk taking. Zuckerman and colleagues (Zuckerman, 1964, 1985, 1988; Zuckerman & Neeb, 1980; and Zuckerman & Ulrich, 1983) have explored a construct of sensation seeking; a general trait with a biochemical basis, that would seem to be a reasonable theoretical explanation for much of the risk-taking behavior we observe. They have found that sensation seeking affects preferences for physical activity, visual complexity, and types of music and media. Glasgow et al. (1985) found a negative association between a personality disposition that is a generalized dislike of uncertainty and a preference for familiar, safe and simple stimuli over those that are novel, complex, and threatening. The Eysencks (1969, 1977, 1978, 1980) have developed a personality measure of impulsiveness with three sub-constructs: impulsivity in the narrow sense, risk taking, and non-planning. Eysenck and Zuckerman (1978) in a study of American and English respondents, concluded that sensation seeking is an uninhibited, non-conforming, and impulsive, dominant type of extraversion. Another construct similar to a risk-taking predisposition is a learned uncertainty orientation (Sorrentino & Hewitt, 1984). Uncertainty oriented individuals like ambiguity, thrive on unpredictability and are risk takers. According to Sorrentino and Short (1986) uncertainty orientation is important in risky situations because these are the type of situations that have a high level of uncertainty. Cognitive factors in information processing are related to uncertainty orientation. Those who are uncertainty oriented try to resolve uncertainty about a new and potentially important personal ability (Sorrentino & Hewitt, 1984). As personal relevance increases, uncertainty oriented individuals are more motivated to engage in systematic processing of messages, while those who are certainty oriented are more motivated when personal relevance decreases (Sorrentino et al., 1988)

Ferguson and Valenti (1987) began their own studies of risk-taking predispositions with the serendipitous inclusion of eight nominal measures of risk taking, most of them borrowed or adapted from the Farley-Fisc-Risk Scale, in a study of 837 home owners to determine public awareness and attitudes toward radon, an environmental risk to the homeowner. The authors assumed a relatively uni-dimensional notion of risk taking, but a factor analysis of the eight items revealed three factors that the authors intuitively labeled, Adventurousness, Impulsiveness and Rebelliousness (Ferguson and Valenti, 1988). Subsequently four field experiments and five surveys were conducted with over 1500 subjects. (See Ferguson and Valenti, 1991 for a full discussion of the research program.)

The next section discusses the findings from these earlier studies both with regard to these types of risk taking and with the effects of variation in messages.

The Adventurous Risk Taker

Some individuals approach risk in a thoughtful and in-control manner (Ferguson & Valenti, 1991). They engage in risk taking with a sense of adventure, report enjoyment of risk and new and exciting experiences, and like to do things that are frightening. The measures for this index include three items from Zuckerman's sensation seeking scale, three items from Eysenck's E-Impulsive risk taking, one item from the Farley-Fisc Risk Scale and two measures the authors created. Although adventurous people are young, like most risk takers, they also are likely to be single, male, relatively well educated, and "cognitive" in their orientation. They have strong concerns about their health and risks associated with their health. When they take risks, they do so with a great deal of information about the risk. These risk takers are likely to be heavy users of radio and are newspaper readers (Ferguson and Valenti, 1991).

The Impulsive Risk Taker

Heedless, impulsive risk taking also seems to represent a common strategy for some risk takers (Ferguson and Valenti, 1988, 1990, 1991a, 1991b). The impulsive risk-taking index is composed of eight items from Eysenck's Impulsivity in the Narrow Sense, plus one item from the authors. The impulsive risk taker buys on impulse, is guided more by feelings than facts, behaves without thought and is often "carried away." Although young, like the adventurous risk takers, the impulsive risk takers are likely to be females, to be smokers, and to have relatively low levels of education and income. These risk takers do not like to think, and, especially, they do not like to think about their health. Newspaper articles about risk are less likely to be effective with these risk takers than are brochures from a local government agency (Ferguson & Valenti, 1991).

The Rebellious Risk Taker

The third type of risk-taking factor emerging in these studies (Ferguson and Valenti, 1988, 1990, 1990b, 1991) is an independent, informed, rebellious risk taker. This index borrows 9 items from Zuckerman's Disinhibition, one item from Eysenck's impulsivity index and uses one item generated by the authors. As with adventurous risk takers, these individuals also are likely to be young, male and single. While these individuals have high levels of concern about health and environmental risks generally, unlike adventurous risk takers, they are rather negative about their own health. And, although these individuals are likely to read specialized magazines, their newspaper use is likely to be confined to "national" rather than local papers. They are heavy users of radio and rely on radio for information about health and environmental risks. These risk takers are more likely to respond to messages about risk that discuss the risks to children rather than the risks to themselves, and when the source is a local agency (Ferguson & Valenti, 1991).

Combining An Inductive and Deductive Approach

This paper reports on the findings of both a survey questionnaire and the results of an inductive--observational approach (four focus group with "known" rebels) in order to generate hypotheses about phenomena for which we previously gathered extensive empirical data.

One of the strengths of the earlier research on adventurous, rebellious and impulsive risk taking is the external validity of the field experiments. The research program began with a three-county field experiment with homeowners (Ferguson and Valenti, 1988), but without a priori hypothetical development of notions of individual differences in risk taking. In fact, the "discovery" of these differences resulted from the researchers' hunch that individuals approached risks differently depending upon the motive for engaging in risk-taking behaviors. The findings of interactions of these undefined (in the first study) risk-taking factors with variation in the messages led the authors to seek other measures of risk-taking attitudes, and to conduct eight subsequent studies not only to replicate the initial finding, but to gain theoretical understanding of why these three different types of risk takers responded differently to variation in messages about risks. In this current stage the authors conducted four focus groups with "known" rebellious risk takers. The intent of this phase was to gather in-depth knowledge of a select group of rebels, in order to generate hypotheses for a later fourth phase of testing of a more refined theory of why rebellious risk taking interacts with variation in message factors. (See Groves, 1987, and Merton, 1987, for basic understanding of focused interviews. For a timely review of focus group research in public relations, see Grunig, 1990.)

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Subjects

Potential members of focus groups were purposively recruited from groups, settings and organizations likely to have rebellious risk takers as members or participants. Students from two undergraduate research methods taught by the researchers recruited respondents and administered questionnaires to 307 individuals to measure the three risk-taking factors identified above and to gather additional information about respondent's use of the media, other risky behaviors, and demographic factors.

To measure rebelliousness respondents were asked to rate themselves on five items, with a scale ranking from 1 to 7, where 1 represented "Not at all like me, and 7 represented "Very much like me." The items were: I feel better when I drink; Keeping the drinks full is the key to a good party; I don't like rules; I like wild and uninhibited parties; and I enjoy the company of real partiers. Following completion of the first part of the questionnaire, the interviewers scored the risk-taking items. Those whose total score was 17 or greater on the five items were classified as rebellious and invited to participate in discussion groups with others like themselves[1]

---

[1] **This values was based upon earlier research with more than 1300 subjects where 3.2 was the mean score (Ferguson, Valenti and Melwani, 1991).**

Approximately one week prior to the scheduled meeting, rebels who made a commitment to attend the discussion group were sent a reminder letter, again emphasizing the date and time of the meeting. One day prior to the meeting, potential focus group members were telephoned to reconfirm attendance at the session. Approximately half of those invited to participate showed up for the sessions.

Four focus groups were conducted: two groups with non-student adults and two groups with student adults. The student and non-student adults were put into separate groups under the assumption that a homogeneous focus group would yield better data than a heterogeneous one.

Group A. members were students recruited from video game arcades, fraternities, campus bars, and the campus gathering square. The students were approached and asked if they would fill out a short questionnaire. Group B. was of non-students recruited from an "excessive speed" driving school, a "progressive" bar, and a local employment agency. Group C. non-students were recruited from Fresh Start, a program for those who are attempting to quit smoking. Group D. was students who were members of various student organizations such as a skydiving club and a surfing club. There were a total of 18 rebels attending the four groups, with group sizes ranging from 4 to 7.

Conditions of Focus Groups

When arriving at the site of the session, focus group members were ushered into a waiting room where they were offered refreshments. During this introduction session, the focus group leader introduced himself or herself and asked the individuals to read and sign an informed consent form indicating they agreed to be video- and audio-taped for the purposes of educational use of the tapes. The moderator and assistant moderator used this time to identify the more and less verbose members of the group. Just prior to ushering group members into the focus group room, first name place cards for those members identified as "talkative" were placed at the sides next to the moderator, while the name of the most "quiet" person was placed directly opposite the moderator, under the assumption that this would encourage the less verbose individual to play a greater role in the group process.

The moderator conducted the group in a meeting room at the journalism and communication building. In addition to a long table and chairs, the room was equipped with a video camera and audio recorder. The camera was located so that members of the focus group on either side of the table or at the end of the table faced the camera while the moderator's back was to the camera.

The authors trained the moderators in focus group techniques. Moderators participated in several practice sessions and one pre-group session with the authors. Prior to conducting the focus group, a topic outline was developed with general question areas to be covered in the group. The outline included an introduction with specification of ground rules, and suggested primary questions: 1) Why are these individuals rebels, 2) How do they approach risks to their health and to the environment, 3) Who are credible sources with these risk takers, 4) What message channels do these risk takers prefer, and 5) What content factors will affect how rebels receive messages about risk? The interview guide also included suggested follow-up probes, but the focus group moderators were trained and encouraged to be responsive to the group and not use the actual questions unless more general non-directive inquiry failed.

At the beginning of each session, group moderators introduced themselves, explained the educational purposes of the study, and began the discussion with an "ice-breaking" question, such as what is your favorite commercial. Group sessions ran from 60 to 90 minutes. In addition to the moderator and the video and audio recording devices, an assistant moderator monitored the equipment and handed comments to the moderator (on note cards) if he/she observed something that should be followed up.

At the conclusion of the session, group members were again invited to partake of refreshments and received a token gift, such as a state lottery ticket.

Analyses of the Survey Data

The analyses of the interview data with the 307 rebels and non-rebels who filled out questionnaires was done using the SPSS/PC+ statistical package. Crossbreaks classified respondents as 1) rebels who were members of the focus groups (N = 18), 2) rebels who did not participate in a group (N = 121), and 3) non-rebellious respondents (N = 115). Tables No. 1 through 3 present the descriptive variables measured for the three groups. Significance tests for differences among these three groups on demographic and descriptive data were conducted and are noted where significant. Also, discussion of the findings points out instances in which confidence intervals do not overlap, at the .05 level.

Comparison of Rebels in Focus Groups with Rebels Not in a Group

Tables 1 through 3 present comparisons of the demographic, attitudinal and risk-taking behaviors of those rebels who participated in a focus group with those who did not. Overall there are several differences that should be noted. Rebels in the focus groups, when compared with those who were rebellious but not in a focus group, were less likely to be single (63.2% vs. 87%); and more likely to be: married (26.3% vs. 8.0%); Protestant (36.8% vs. 22.5%); service workers (21.1% vs.7.9%); have liberal leanings (63.2% vs. 42%); smokers (47.4% vs. 26.6%); not regularly use seat belts (31.6% vs. 44.6%); and drink more than 6 drinks on the weekend (57.9% vs. 43.6%) and 1 to 3 drinks on a weekday (66.7% vs. 43.3%). Also, members of the focus groups had higher use of television for news (34.2% vs. 16.2%), and more use of magazines for sports (23.7% vs. 15.5%). These demographic differences are reported to reinforce the reader's understanding that focus group members may or may not reflect the population of rebels.

[Table 1 to 3 About Here]

Table. 1. Proportion of Rebels in the Focus Groups, Rebels Not in a Group and Those Who Are Not Rebels for Demographic Variables

	Rebels in a Group N = 18	Rebels Not in Group N = 121	Not A Rebel N = 115	
Gender:				
Males	68.4%	65.7%	47.7%	
		Chi-square:	10.0(12), $p \le .007$	
Marital Status:				
Divorced, Widowed, Other	10.5	5.1	7.6	
Married	26.3	8.0	27.3	
Single	63.2	87.0	65.2	
		Chi-square:	20.5(4), $p \le .0004$	
Religion:				
Protestant	36.8	22.5	34.8	
Catholic	26.3	31.2	14.4	
Other	10.5	19.6	25.0	
None	15.8	20.3	17.4	
Jewish	10.5	6.5	8.3	
		Chi-square:	15.2(8), $p \le .06$	
Attend Church:				
Never	36.8	35.3	28.8	
Occasionally	57.9	51.1	47.0	
Frequently	5.3	5.8	10.6	
Regularly	0.0	7.9	13.6	
				ns
Education:				
High School or less	10.5	10.7	19.7	
Some College	73.7	70.0	54.5	
Four Year Degree or More	15.8	19.3	25.8	
		Chi-square:	8.5(14), $p \le .07$	
Occupation:				
Student	47.4	52.1	34.8	
Professional, Technical	21.1	15.7	23.5	
Unemployed, Homemaker, Other	10.5	16.4	18.2	
Service Workers	21.1	7.9	13.6	
Clerical, Craft, Sales	0.0	7.9	9.8	
		Chi-square:	13.1(8), $p \le .11$	
Income:				
Under $20,000	78.9	85.3	65.4	
$20-29,999	15.8	8.1	15.7	
$30-39,999	0.0	1.5	6.3	
>$40,000	5.3	5.1	12.6	
		Chi-square:	16.5(6), $p \le .02$	
Race:				
White	78.9	84.9	81.5	
Other	21.2	15.1	18.5	ns
Age:				
Mean	26.9	24.6	31.9	
		F-ratio:	14.5(2,288), $p \le .0001$	

Table. 2. Opinions, and Risky Attitudes and Behaviors of Rebels in the Focus Groups, Rebels Not in a Group and Those Who Are Not Rebels

	Rebels in a Group N = 18	Rebels Not in Group N = 121	Not A Rebel N = 115
Political Leanings:			
Conservative Leanings	5.3%	27.5%	28.2%
Moderate	26.3	20.3	31.3
Liberal Leanings	63.2	42.0	37.4
Other	5.3	10.1	3.1
		Chi-square:	14.5(6), p≤.03
Social Concerns and Issues:			
Environment	36.8%	34.1%	33.6%
Health	21.1	15.2	21.1
Other Social Issues	21.1	26.1	23.4
Economy	15.8	18.8	20.3
None	5.3	5.8	1.6
			ns
Last Medical Checkup			
Past Year	52.6%	54.7%	67.2%
1 to 2 years ago	26.3	20.1	14.5
2 to 3 years ago	10.5	7.9	9.2
Over 3 years ago	10.5	11.5	5.3
Currently Smoke			
Yes	47.4%	26.6%	22.7%
		Chi-square:	5.2(2), p≤.08
Speed Normally Drive on Clear Road			
Mean Mph in 55 Mph zone	66.8	69.4	63.6
		F-ratio:	16.3(2,281), p≤.0001
Wear Seat Belts			
Never	15.8%	11.5%	2.3%
Occasionally	15.8	21.6	15.3
Frequently	36.8	22.3	16.8
Regularly	31.6	44.6	65.6
		Chi-square:	21.8(6), p≤.002
Number of Drinks on the Weekend			
Don't Drink Ever	0.0%	12.1%	41.7%
1 to 3	15.8	19.3	29.9
4 to 6	21.1	21.4	11.0
More than 6	57.9	43.6	7.1
Other responses	5.3	3.6	10.2
		Chi-square:	79.1(8), p≤.0001
Number of Drinks on a Weekday			
Don't Drink Ever	0.0%	14.2%	49.1%
1 to 3	66.7	43.3	17.6
4 to 6	0.0	5.8	0.9
More than 6	13.3	5.8	0.0
Other responses	20.0	30.8	32.4
		Chi-square:	59.8(8), p≤.0001

Table. 3. Type of Media Preferred by Rebels in the Focus Groups, Rebels Not in a Group and Those Who Are Not Rebels

	Rebels in a Group N=18	Rebels Not in Group N=121	Not A Rebel N=115
Favorite TV Programs:			
News, News Magazines, Education	34.2%	16.2%	24.1%
Situation Comedies	26.3	26.6	22.9
Drama, Soaps, Movies, Docudrama	15.8	20.3	22.6
Sports Programs	7.9	7.6	5.6
Cartoons	5.3	6.6	1.5
Family, General Entertainment	5.3	8.3	9.4
None	5.3	14.5	13.9
		Chi-square:	20.9(12), $p \leq .10$
Favorite Newspapers:			
Local Community Paper	34.2%	23.4%	25.9%
Campus Paper	15.8	15.2	14.3
Miami Herald	5.3	3.8	3.8
Wall Street Journal	5.3	3.4	1.1
Tampa Times	2.6	11.0	4.9
Orlando Sentinel	2.6	3.8	3.8
Other State Newspapers	13.2	5.2	6.0
Other National Newspapers	5.3	2.1	2.3
New York Times	0.0	4.5	4.9
USA Today	0.0	3.8	5.6
Other	2.6	8.3	9.4
None	13.2	15.5	18.0
		Chi-square:	27.9(22), $p \leq .25$
Favorite Magazines:			
Sports, Boating, Fishing, Hunting	23.7%	15.5%	13.9%
News	10.5	5.2	7.9
Service, Trade, Professional	7.9	9.0	8.6
General Interest	7.9	6.2	6.4
Adult, Men's	7.9	4.5	1.5
Women's, Parenting	5.3	15.6	15.4
History, Public Affairs	5.3	4.1	7.5
Art, Antiques, Hobbies	2.6	0.3	1.9
Automobiles & Accessories	2.6	6.2	2.3
Other	2.6	4.8	12.8
None	21.1	18.3	15.4
No Answer	2.6	10.3	6.4
		Chi-square:	46.3(22), $p \leq .005$
Favorite Radio Stations			
Campus Stations	36.8%	23.4%	19.2%*
Pop, Top 40, Dance	31.6	30.3	30.1
Rock, Soul, R&B	10.5	10.3	6.4
Easy Listening	2.6	1.7	7.1
Country	0.0	4.1	6.4
Classical, Jazz	0.0	3.8	6.4
Other	0.0	7.2	7.5
None	13.2	10.3	10.2
No Answer	5.3	8.6	6.8
		Chi-square:	29.5(16), $p \leq .025$

Comparison of Rebels Not in A Focus Group with Non-Rebels

Early research has indicated that rebels differ from non-rebels on several attributes. Rebels (but who did not attend a focus group) and non-rebels responded differently on several variables. Rebels were more likely to be males (65.7% vs. 47.7%), single (87% vs. 65.2%), Catholic (31.2% vs. 14.4%) have some college, but not a degree (70% vs. 54.5%), be a college student (52.1% vs. 34.8%), make less than $20,000 annually (85.3% vs. 65.4%), drive fast (69.4 Mph vs. 63.6 Mph), never or only occasionally wear seat belts (33.1% vs. 17.6%), and have more than 6 drinks on the weekend (43.6% vs. 7.1%) and 1 to 3 drinks on a weekday (43.3% vs. 17.6%)

Transcriptions of Focus Group Tapes

The second step of the analysis was to transcribe, verbatim, the audio tapes of the focus groups. These transcripts were produced by student team members and cross-checked for accuracy by other team members. The authors then viewed the tapes and read the transcripts for insight into rebellious focus group members. Direct quotes from group members are reported in the next section to support the proposed hypotheses. The particular group of the member, A,B,C, or D, is indicated by the capital letter following the name, i.e., Dick A. indicates that Dick was a member of Group A. In instances where several group members made comments that seem to bolster the hypothesis, these comments are reported in end notes.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES FROM INDUCTION

What is Risk Taking?

The authors have defined risk taking from the actor's perspective,

> Something is a risk only if it is perceived to have some likelihood of negative consequences, which can include the loss of a potential reward as well as a punishment. A risk-taking predisposition occurs when individuals are not risk aversive but, in fact, are attracted to risks; it is a general tendency to engage in behaviors that the actors understand have the likelihood of punishment or loss of reward, or other negative consequences. (Ferguson & Valenti, 1990, pp. 8-9)

Members of the focus groups had their own ideas about what it meant to be a risk taker. Michael C. said,

> ". . . risk taking to me is, ah, pretty much how I run my life and the risks I've taken in my life. I've been pretty much a wanderer, job-to-job-to-job-to-job. Well, most of my life. For the last 10 years I've done real well. To me that's risk taking. I'm an artist. I've had ups and down. There is no guarantee. You can be rich one day and dirt poor the next. Which is pretty well true. That's risk taking. Sometimes I've lived in an apartment. There've been times I've had so much money I didn't know what to do with it all. Went out and spent it real quick! That's what I feel risk taking is."[2]

Lets You Be You

Many of the rebels in these groups perceive themselves as "being true" to their inner spirit. According to Brent A.: "It lets you be you if you are unrestrained. If you go to a party, you can sit in the corner and be by yourself or you can get wild and dance on the tables or just be an animal. It lets you be you." Craig said: "It's that you can do what you want and have fun."

> H1: Messages that stress "you be you" are more likely to receive the attention of the rebel than those that do not.

Need for Control or an Identify of Self-control

The rebellious risk taker exhibits a strong need to maintain an image of having control over themselves. Although these risk takers admit to being a bit unrestrained, they continually assert that they are "in control." These risk takers talk about never going beyond some preset limits, which they define as the "extremes."

Several examples of this kind of discussion were observed in the groups: Ted B. explained: "You just have to be responsible. Or going to the extremes, but being responsible within them--I don't go to the extremes. Extreme in anything isn't really good for you. But if you know how to, like you said, channel it, then use it for your own benefit. . . .If you have a test or anything, prepare for it first, take the test, then go out and drink if you don't have anything else to do." Billy B. explained how he avoided extremes: "I'm not going to drink heavily if I have to go to work the next day."[3]

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[2] **Mary C.: "I guess there are many ways to look at risk. If there's a risk--are you going to jump off a cliff, or are you going to quit your job, or are you going to take the risk of smoking. When you mention those three words, you make it sound like it's a wild person. I guess you can interpret each word differently. Yeah. I guess I'm a little risky. I'm pregnant and I smoke. So I could be classified as a risk taker."**

Sonya B.: "I don't remember ever getting into that much trouble in school for being rebellious. . . . After school, yeah. Lots of times. Not showing up when my mother told me I had to be home and things like that."

H2: Messages that suggest ways for the rebel to avoid the "extremes" or "to take control" are more likely to be effective than those that suggest extreme behaviors.

These risk takers not only strive to maintain a self-image of being in control, they view their risk taking in a positive light and expect others to appreciate their rebelliousness. According to Michael C., "I stayed in a lot of trouble because I used to skip school and go up to the races, horse races. . . but then I'm an artist and everybody likes an artist, so when I got in trouble, I started doing art work for the school and it kinda made up for it. I kinda kept a happy medium."[4]

H3: Messages that show respect for the rebel's creativity or boldness are more likely to receive attention than those that do not.

These are risk takers who calculate and attempt to counter-balance the risks they take.[5] As Mary C. says, "As an individual you have to weigh your risks. Is it worth it to you? Is it worth it to be free and go out in the sun and tan your body and have a chance of getting sun cancer? Is it worth it for you to smoke cigarettes and have the chance of getting lung cancer? It's your choice." Diane C. (a non-smoker) added, "I do sit out in the sun and I don't use any lotion except on my face and it's--you know, I can understand as far as when you were talking about the cigarettes, if you want to do that, you know, it's fine. But you do have that risk, definitely, you know: melanomas, wrinkles, . . . I guess, everybody has their price."

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[3] **John B: "You have to be a responsible drinker."**

Diane C.: "I could say no. I mean, I had those times, but I still could control it where I wouldn't get in trouble. I know where the limit is."

Mary C.: "I always said when I get pregnant I'll quit smoking, but it's a lot easier said than done. . . . if you tell me I can't have that one cigarette or two cigarettes in one day, then I'd go crazy."

[4] **Mary C.: "It, to a degree, works to your advantage because you're the type of person who will ask a question whether you think it's dumb or not. . . . I would not get rebellious to the point where I would stand there and argue with the teacher, or, you know, carry on in class."**

John C: ". . . it works both ways. It's a double-edged sword. People that get bored easily in school, you know, talk up and act out and get in some trouble, but they're also seen as more creative."

[5] **Andy A.: I have this kind of idea that you have if you care about what you eat, and don't eat all kinds of junk food and stuff, then you will live longer. So, what you do is watch what you eat and then drink at lot, cause that's going to hold down your life span and then you don't have to watch what you eat anymore."**

Mark B: "Well, I figure if I'm gonna smoke cigarettes and die when I'm 75 with cancer, like the saying goes, 'eat right, get plenty of exercise, and die anyway.' You know, if I die when I'm 75 of cancer, I've lived my life."

Billy B.: "Right, so you're saying 'eat right, exercise, and die tomorrow,' or 'have a good time, party, and die of old age?'"

Mark B: No. I'm not blowing off exercise. I try to exercise and all to offset the smoking a little bit, but I'm not just gonna quit smoking just because everybody says, 'You're gonna get cancer and die!' I realize that everybody's gonna die sooner or later, and I'm not gonna die a young man because of smoking. Most people who die of smoking live the better part of their life."

Michael C.: "Maybe this is hypocritical, I don't know, but it seems every day I turn on the TV and something new is causing cancer. This is cancerous to your health, this can cause cancer. I mean every day it's something. So what's wrong with cigarettes? Now that's just the way I feel about it. Maybe it's a cop-out, maybe it's an excuse."

H4: Messages that provide information to these risk takers to help them to "weigh" risks, are more likely to receive attention than those that do not.

H5: Messages will be more effective if they stress that the rebel has to make the choice or decision himself or herself.

These risk takers have a strong aversion to rules and regulations. According to Andy A., "Well, it's not that I don't like rules. It's just that sometimes you got to break them. . . . You know it's like you have to be 21 to drink. Who says that? . . . I mean, like no one follows that. I mean, if you were a real rule-following kind of person you would feel all uptight about it. . . . I've gotten six speeding tickets."[6]

That these risk takers commonly ignore rules is quite apparent when they talk about their driving habits. Jay A. said, "You'll go as fast as the car will go." Mike A. explained, "Just wherever my foot feels comfortable. . . . I don't even watch my speed. I'll just be driving down the road, and they'll stop me, and I'll be like, 'Well, how fast was I going? Sorry, I didn't think. It was an open road.'" Jay A. added, "You'll be like ten, or fifteen or twenty over. But then, if it was an open road, then you can go like thirty, forty, fifty or sixty, you know."

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[6] **Michael C.: "I'm very independent. I really don't care. If the rules get too strict, boggie." "You know, I am the type of person that if the rules and regs at work get too restrictive, I might just go and find another job. I'm not hurting anyone, I'm not breaking any rules of society by doing that, of course, that's what I consider risk taking is."**

Sonya C.: "Well, growing up I had the perfect little sister. And it was my goal in life that every time she would obey our parents, I would disobey them. That was, that's how I got my kicks. . . . the drinking age was 18 as I was growing up, so you started drinking at 14 and 15. It's no big deal."

John C: "Um, what comes to mind to me, is that this country's based on breaking rules. It wouldn't be a free country, if we hadn't broken rules."

H6: Messages that present information to risk takers as "rules" or "laws" are more likely to be ignored than those that suggest that sometimes breaking rules is "good."

Sensation and Stimulation

These rebels have a high need for sensation, stimulation and vividness in their stimuli. This is consistent with their preference for commercials, choice of colors, and of music. Jay A. typifies this risk taker when he discusses the "rush" from taking physical risks: "It's like I like to go out surfing and it's a rush on the waves. When I race motorcross, it's a rush. When you drive your car real fast, it's a rush. It's just so fun--so exhilarating. What if you mess up? And the danger! It's so cool!"[7]

H7: Messages that recreate a "rush" of excitement are more likely to receive the attention of the rebel than are those that do not.

These risk takers prefer high levels of activity and motion in their messages and have little time for those who are inactive. Tina explains, ". . . I don't like to be around people that don't want to do anything. . . rather than people that are like inhibited by everybody else." Billy B. along with several of the other participants mentioned that one of their favorite commercials was ". . . that Energizer commercial. 'Still going.' I just thought it was very innovative that they came up with that commercial and they keep coming up with new segments for it, because commercials are so boring nowadays."[8]

Music and Colors Should Stimulate

These risk takers have a strong need for aural and visual stimulation, as reflected in the music they prefer, and in their choice of colors. Jay A. says, "I like metal. . . . Def Leppard Photograph. Classic Van Halen never hurts." Tina A. said, "I like the old Duran

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[7] **Andy A.: ". . . like the other day . . . we took out one of the bigger boats that I had never gone out in before and the wind was incredible! . . . and we messed up and flipped over and it was just awesome! . . . I just went smack into it and it like hurt and I was lucky I didn't get hurt. It was really wild! That's a kind of rush. . . . It's like I ran a lot in cross country. It was hard. It was like a challenge. You run five miles or something, or ten--or whatever. It's a long way. It really sucks. You say why the hell am I doing this. . . . but when it's over you say, damn that was awesome. You know, I did it and it's satisfaction."**

Mike A.: I skated for four years on a skateboard . . . it's like you got to have a lot of guts to do it . . .I just had to try this trick and, you know, because everybody else was. . . . I could have ended my life right there. . . .and it's just like seeing the water rushing toward you and hearing the rush of the air (wheww...) would make your stomach come like up into your throat. It's like something that you have to do, you can't explain it."

[8] **Brent A.: "I like the Energizer Rabbit"**

Duran." Brent A., "The Doors. . . . I like a lot of stuff from the sixties because they're controversial. The Doors, Janis Joplin, you know, and the China Beach soundtrack . . ." Mark A., "Jane's Addiction." Jay A.: "Oh they're excellent man. Mark A., "Their new album is really good."[9]

One of the moderators asked, "What is your favorite color?" Red, blue and gray were the only colors mentioned: Mike A. said, "Blue, I think." Jan A.: "Red." Craig A.: "Gray" Jay A.: "Red." Tina A.: "I like red." Andy A.: "Blue is my favorite." "Blue." Mike A.: "The gray is there."

H8: Messages that use "controversial or rebellious" music are more likely to receive attention from the rebel, than those that do not.

H9: Messages that use basic, vibrant colors, such as red and blue, will be more likely to attract attention from these risk takers than those that use pastel or non-vibrant colors.

The Bigger the Crowd, the Better

These are risk takers who truly enjoy and seek out the presence of other people. Ted B. explains he likes parties because they have, " . . . a lot of activity, keep busy. You go to a nice big party, everyone's around, there's a lot going on. I like to keep busy." Brett B.: "Yeah, to meet people, to talk, find friends, whatever." Others concur, "John B adds, "It also helps when you're with a lot of friends. You can do stupid things and you know, they say something about it the next day and they'll think it's funny . . . I kind of like being around more people that I know." Mark A. comments, "My idea of a good party is one that you can't find a seat. You can't find anywhere to sit down . . . I can go there with 4 or 5 people I know . . . but everyone else is . . . people I don't know. I like that because I think that's the main reason for a party, people to get together and meet new people."[10]

H10: Activities designed to appeal to these risk takers will be more likely to be attended if these individuals understand that there will be many other people attending, than if they believe it will be a small, intimate group.

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[9] **Tina A., "You know what's funny though, I thought it was a girl singing." (Followed by lots of discussion about the album.) Mike A., "But I like that their lyrics are really good, like every song just tells a little story."**

[10] **Billy: "Just a lot of people a lot of alcohol, good music."**
John A: "Yeah, lots of people and, I guess if the music is keeping everyone moving around and talking loud. The louder people are talking, usually, the louder things are, people are having a better time."

Not only do these risk takers like to be around others, they have a high need for social approval and will conform their own behavior to meet what they think others want from them. As some of these individuals explained, this goes as far as both smoking and not smoking to please others. Andy A. says, "If I'm around smokers, I will smoke a couple months and then get tired of it." Michael C. curtails his smoking to please strangers: "If I'm sitting next to someone and I know they don't smoke or if I don't know if they smoke or not, I've been asking lately, 'I'm sorry, do cigarettes bother you?' If they say yes, I won't smoke around them. I'll move a couple of stools down the bar. No problem. Or I'll go to the bathroom or whatever. It doesn't matter."

H11: An indication that a "similar other" disapproves or approves of a particular behavior is more likely to cause this risk taker to modify his or her behavior than no expression of approval or disapproval.

Heroes are Wacky and Weird

These rebels admire other rebels, particularly those they describe as "wacky." Bart Simpson was mentioned several times as an admired other. Brett B. said in response to a question about his favorite commercial, "It was a Butterfinger commercial with Bart Simpson, where he goes, 'You're gonna die of malnutrition, dude.' So, it's like these people, the characters themselves, just the way they had them look and I had never seen them before." Mark B. added, "That's before I'd even heard of the Simpsons. I was going, 'That's a neat commercial.' I didn't ever know who it was." John B. concurred: "That was mine, but I guess the other ones are the Lite beer commercials with Bob Uecker, because he's pretty stupid in those. . . . just because they're funny and because I've seen him before on Carson and stuff, and he's a pretty wacky guy." Jane B. also likes the Simpsons: "I like the Simpson's now, the kids got me into the Simpsons. . . . They're unrestrained. They're so real, they represent a genuine look at a nine-year old's personality, lower middle class parent's views about things. My favorite is Crusty the Clown. I also like Charles Karault on Sunday morning."[11]

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[11] **John B: I like the Simpson's also, because Bart is such a weird person. I like the Wonder Years too because Kevin Arnold on the show has ups and down just like everyone else. Like one time you'll watch**

A "common folks' theme resounded through this discussion of heroes. Several group members mentioned that they liked Joe Isuzu: Jay A. "I like the Joe Isuzu commercial." Andy A. "I like those too." Ted B.: "I like the Joe Isuzu commercials. . . . Joe Isuzu, The Toyota. . . he lies and comes out and gets a person to buy his cars. It's pretty funny and it's a smart way to get people to look at the car."

When asked specifically about sources that others like themselves might find credible, Tina A. responded, "Someone you looked up to, that was a hero to them. . . . Dan Marino." Lisa D. said, "It has to be someone the kids look up to. Like a sports person . . . cause we were saying that we formed a lot of our ideas from our friends or people we look up to. I think it should be someone that they admire." Brent A.: "I'd listen to the athlete over the president."

This sort of comment reveals how little these risk takers trust some others. They were very skeptical of the motives of "paid" sources. Mark A. typified this: "I think people have a very pessimistic attitude toward things lately. . . . I think, you know, people don't want to hear it from another person. . . you know, well, that's somebody paid to get up and say. . . I think a lot of people think it's fake." Andy A. provided another example: "They had this ad on TV. It was, his name was John Glenn. . . . But then you see at the bottom a five dollar charge will be added to your phone bill. . . . he's obviously getting paid for it. . . .He wants his $2.50 cut from the phone call. And so it's not, that's not persuasive at all."[12]

(footnote continued)

and he'll have a great week and the next week he's stumbling through the whole show. It just seems like it's life."

Brett B.: "My favorite show is Cheers. I don't really know why. It's like all of the characters are so weird. Like Norm never goes to work."

Ted B.: "I like Head of the Class. The main actor is a comedian on HBO--stand-up. He is hilarious."

Mark B.: "I'm kinda hooked on Twin Peaks. It is very weird and it's like a small town and everybody is doing everybody and everybody has got this deep secret that just about everybody knows, but don't want to admit. I mean there is just so many things, it's like the tangled web we weave, it's just so weird. The characters are weird and off-the-wall. I really like it."

Billy B.: "I think the funniest show is on Sunday night, America's Funniest Video. The show is hysterical, because no matter what mood I'm in, that show can always make me laugh. Watching people do stupid stuff--I find that entertaining."

[12] **Mark B.: "I think they're trying to make themselves look good. I think that's all they're worried about--marketing."**

John D: "And all these stars started endorsing these causes, and you wonder if they did it for publicity or are they doing it cuz they really want to help?"

These risk takers have some strong opinions about "expert" sources. When asked by the moderator, "What about experts in the field? Let's say if the surgeon general came on, or someone? They got a local expert like a really respected doctor?" Craig responded, "I don't think so because you can get on and say smoking is bad for you, but everybody knows that." Andy A. added, "It's kind of like William Bennett. Drugs are here. He smokes a pack a day. He's addicted to nicotine. 'Don't do drugs. Don't get addicted to drugs.' But you know, he's addicted to one himself."

There was one expert source who was an exception--a personal doctor. Tom D. said that, "I think if a person doesn't, you know, hear what his doctor is saying, he is an idiot. You know, if you don't take into consideration what your professionalized doctor, whatever medical guy, then, then whatever happens to you is your own fault."

Government sources are not believed to be trustworthy by these risk takers. John C. recalled, "Well, I was less than 15 miles from Three-Mile Island when that accident happened and I can tell you from experience what you know is that you can't trust anything they tell you and that's based on our government's history." Michael C.: "Amen." John D.: "I think we could elect more responsible government officials. I have a personal thing against politicians. I think there's just so much mismanagement and under-the-table dealings that go on."

When asked about other credible sources, several members of these groups suggested that they would find a "victim" a credible source. Mark B.: "Victims." Brett B.: "Yeah, people who've been there. Recovering alcoholics or something." Jane B.: "That's depressing." Brett B.: Well, it's real people who've been hurt." Diane C.: "Well, just based on myself, I would prefer a visual-type expression of it. So you know if you see someone that just got in a wreck or something really awful, maybe that would make you think about it a little more."

H12: A rebellious risk taker is more likely to respond favorably to a message from the following sources: weird and wacky characters, "just common folks"-characters, sports heroes, victims, and their own personal doctor and unfavorably to government sources, paid actors, and the surgeon general.

Attitudes and Opinions of the Rebel

Moderators specifically asked group members about environmental risks, health risks, dietary risks, and other risks that concerned them. The next section reviews discussion about these topics.

1) The Environment--Dare to Care About Tomorrow

Moderators asked the group members what they felt about various environmental risks. There was universal and often vehement concern expressed about the environment by these risk takers. Mike A. said, "I think we got to look after that a little more than we've been doing because I don't want to like grow up and die because of something in the air . . . I just don't want like the sewage in the ocean . . . and my kids to grow up and not be able to do anything like because the earth's so dirty. . . . there's so much shit all over the place and they can't go to the beach or can't even go outside, I'm just thinking that can happen." Craig A. added, "I've gone scuba diving and all the reefs are starting to die from all the pollution and stuff. And there are places where I've gone diving where you look around in a hole and all you see are paper factories."

a) Water Quality--What Goes Down Comes Around

When asked by the moderator about their biggest environmental concern, several topics were mentioned including water, and air. Concerns about water were preeminent. John B. said, "Just water. . . . Watch what you throw into the ground, the kind of chemicals and stuff, like don't dump your motor oil and stuff like that. . . there was something in the paper the other day, like when you flush the toilet. . . . plus whatever you put down there is coming back around."[13] Blame or responsibility for water quality problems was attributed

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[13] Brett B.: "That's true."

Ted B.: "We don't know what's going into a lot of the streams and rivers, especially where you see these paper plants and a lot of these industrial plants. They really need to find ways to dispose of our waste because it can get into the ground water and then get into our water."

Billy B.: "I took a geology class and it's scary at the rate we're losing our fresh water and aquifers especially because the sea water from the ocean is coming in and taking over, and we really need to save our water because one day it's gonna be gone. . . . I say this show on TV, some star on a talk show and they talked about how to conserve water when you turn on the water and brush your teeth and you leave the water going, can you imagine how much water you waste? So, whenever I brush my teeth, I turn the water off."

Mark B.: "I started walking around. I got into the habit of getting my toothbrush ready and going and standing in from of the TV before I got to work just brushing my teeth."

Billy B.: "And when you turn on the shower and the phone rings, do you leave the water on?"

John C.: "As far as Florida goes, the water levels aren't enough, where we'll have to completely

to government, industry and the individual. Michael C. blames the government and industry, "Now it's getting real serious. Um, it's worldwide. Talking about Florida, the Corp of Engineers does more harm than good. They have screwed up the Everglades big time by diverting the water. Thought they had handled it--didn't. Gas companies, big oil companies, money-money hungry. They're just money hungry. They're not gonna be here tomorrow. They don't care. Make enough money, die and go. Who cares what comes tomorrow."[14] Sonya C. concurs, "The major is probably the pollutants, I would think, that's put out by the big industries. The paper mills and the companies that are dumping their waste into the river and stuff like that. . . . I think if the line's not drawn somewhere, there are not gonna be too many more future generations." Diane C. agreed with Sonya, "I would sort of agree with what Sonya said as far as the industry polluting the environment with the air pollutants, the water pollutants, you know. They're just interested in making money--forget about everybody else.

H13: Messages associated with environmental risk to water quality will be more likely to attract the attention of rebels than will those that do not focus on water quality.

H14: Messages to rebels about water quality that stress that what goes into the ground, will later come back, will be more effective than those that do not.

b) Recycle or Trash--Pay Today or Pay Tomorrow

Several of the comments were about waste disposal and recycling. Sonya C. said, "Well going back to what Mary says about individuals . . . If you had to pay for the amount of garbage you produced, then maybe that would change a lot of people's attitudes. I know, we have to pay for ours. I live 40 miles out of the city and we have to pay the dump now. It makes you think twice about what you can recycle and things like that."[15] Mark B. was

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(footnote continued)

change our lifestyle, if we wanna continue living in Florida."

[14] Mary C.: "Yeah. You don't know what's in the water that you drink. . . . Not only are we in trouble because of low water levels, but the water that is there is so polluted."

Diane C.: "I would say that I agree. I mean, if you don't look at it now, the future generation's definitely gonna have a problem. It's obvious."

[15] Brett B.: "If it will save the earth for a while longer then it's worth it."

John B.: "Just recycling anything, I think, is good because like Gainesville recycles a lot."

Brent A: "You can recycle a lot of beer cans after a party too."

also concerned with recycling, "I think trash is a big thing. . . . I really don't think they've been getting rid of it the best possible way they can by burying it. . . I think they should use, take all the ferrous metals out of it and then run it through a giant shredding machine that shreds it and then send it into an incinerator that makes electricity. And there is a big story in Mechanics Illustrated, I believe it is, that there is a place up north that has a prototype plant that's in operation doing this--and the waste that they actually have to put in the ground is so little and they're getting all this energy at a really low price."

H15: Messages about recycling of trash that stress how recycling can save money, not only today, but also tomorrow will be more successful with the rebel than those that do not.

c) The Ozone--or Why Did It Snow In Florida Last Year?

These risk takers expressed strong concern about the atmosphere. Brent B. is very concerned about the ozone. He said, "Atmosphere. The ozone. The holes in the ozone are causing the unusual seasons and um well like our snow last year. Acid rain problems." John D. said, "And the planet is being deforested. Which means there will be less oxygen for our plants and less plants to absorb the carbon dioxide. . . . Yeah, definitely the greenhouse effect. Cuz I was, ahh, watching PBS a couple of day ago and they had a show on how we're going to be losing all these small countries in the Pacific. They will just disappear under the water." John C. gave a similar response, "Well, worldwide, I'd say the primary problem is the ozone." [16]

H16: Messages about protecting the ozone that focus on drastic changes to the climate (from sunshine to snow, for example) will receive more attention from rebels than those that do not.

d) Abuse Mother Nature and She'll Leave Home

At least one of the focus group members expressed concern about natural resources in general. Mary C. said, "I think the, um, biggest problem is the depletion of the natural resources, not just by industry, but by individuals as well. . . . we abuse water, we abuse gas, we think it's gonna be there forever. Gas is only gonna be here another 90 years and then what are we gonna do. . . . We over-abuse the land--we grow too much food and we have, um, silos full of wheat. . . .People exploit the land, the water, we're throwing sewage everywhere."

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[16] **Ted B.: "I'm a member of Greenpeace--I really care about the environment and what is going on around us. . . . Recycle in your neighborhood, watch what you're doing, stay away from aerosols and stuff like that--things that can get into the atmosphere, cause like you said, we're going to have cooler winters and hotter summers--and we're messing with our trees."**

H17: Messages that stress the finiteness of natural resources will be more likely to get the attention of rebel than will those that do not.

2) Health--Be Serious About It

In addition to questions about environmental risks, the moderators also asked about other health risks of concern. Focus group members talked about smoking, drinking and sexually transmitted diseases.

a) Smokers--the Lepers of the Next Decade

With regard to smoking, many of the focus group members expressed a belief in the risks associated with smoking, but did not believe they were going to be able to quit. Sonya C. said she believed smokers would be as popular as lepers: "I think the biggest one has got to be cigarettes and smoking. . . . in probably another 10 years those of us that do smoke are just gonna be social outcasts. . . . some of us can't or will not smoke in our homes. I won't because I have a child. . . . I think within 10 years those of us, those of us that are still smoking are just, we're gonna be like lepers. People are just gonna shun us entirely I think. . . . I don't know if I can. . . . I think that eventually I will because my mother babysits my four-year old and she has taught her to tell me every time I light up a cigarette that if I don't quit smoking, that I'm going to die, and it's starting to get on my nerves a little bit. I think I may have to quit before she drives me crazy."

Mary C., although she has not been able to quit while she is pregnant, holds out hope that she will one day quit, "I smoke myself. I don't smoke very much, but I'm pregnant. But before I was smoking, what, I smoked a pack--a pack and a half a day. . . . Now I don't do that, but I'm not gonna be one of these people who when they quit smoking, if somebody comes over and wants to smoke in your house, say, 'you can't smoke. You're not gonna blow it in my baby's face, but I'm not gonna be hypocritical. . ." Diane C.: "As a non-smoker, I view it very, you know, dangerous. . . . don't put that thing in my atmosphere to breathe. I don't like it that much." Michael C. views himself as a victim, "subjected" to acquiring the habit at a young age and now, 33 years later, unable to quit. "It's just like drugs, like alcohol and cocaine and everything else. I think you get subjected to it. I've been smoking since I was 14 years old and I'm 47 now. I smoke two packs a day, and I don't care, I'm gonna smoke. I've tried quitting. I've tried everything under the sun. The hell with it."

When talking about the difficulty of changing their behaviors, some of the focus group members argued that it's more effective to educate those who are young and have not formed the habits. Joy D. argued, "Cuz, if you teach them all when they're young, they'll always do it, you know. Like learning math. Once you learn it, you'll always keep doing it." Tom D. concurred, "It's hard to learn as you get older too." Lisa D. agreed, "Or maybe not to learn, but to change your ways, you know."

H18: Messages to rebels about quitting smoking will be more successful if they stress that smokers are social outcasts, than if they do not.

b) Booze and Cigarettes Go Together . . .

There was a continual theme throughout this discussion linking cigarettes and alcohol. These risk takers draw strong connections between cigarettes and alcohol; in fact, they often mentioned them in the same breath. As Andy A. puts it, "But when you're drunk, don't the cigarettes like just taste so good? Just like candy can." Michael C. offered a similar appraisal, "I get a great deal of satisfaction out of a cigarette, especially after a meal. Especially while sitting at the bar and drinking. They seem to go together. You know, cigarettes--beer, cigarettes--beer."

These risk takers differentiate the effects of these stimulants. As Mark A. says, "I smoke cigarettes off and on. It's different from alcohol, because . . . it's bad for you, but at least you're getting something more out of it [alcohol] . . . You know you're taking the chance and at least getting the result that you want from it--some kind of consolation and you just don't get that from smoking."

H19: Anti-smoking campaigns or anti-drinking campaigns that target both smoking and drinking in the same campaign will have greater effectiveness with the rebel.

H20: Anti-smoking campaigns or anti-drinking campaigns that recognize that the benefits the rebels receive from smoking are different from those of drinking will be more successful than those that do not.

c) If you're serious about your drinking, be just as serious about your driving!

As with cigarettes, these risk takers approach alcohol "seriously," but without discussion about quitting. John B. reports, "I don't consider myself a heavy drinker, but when I drink, I drink heavily. Like I won't drink a lot, you know, day-wise, maybe I'll only drink twice a week. But when I'm drinking, you know, I just go for it." B9 Mark B.: "One beer is just enough to piss me off." Jane B.: "I don't drink everyday either, but when I do, I drink to drink. To get drunk. I don't know really when to quit and I don't quit until it's way beyond the point of no return." One of the moderators asked if these risk takers liked to play drinking games and why. John D. responded, "Getting drunk. . . . That's the whole point of a drinking game, isn't it? I mean, it's not--you don't play a drinking game to sit around. It's a social ice breaker."

These drinkers do not perceive themselves as having a drinking problem because they are not constant drinkers, but the data would suggest these rebels are likely to be "drunk" (have more than six drinks) at least once on the weekend.

H21: Messages to rebels about drinking and driving that remind the rebels they are "serious" drinkers and should be serious drivers are more likely to be effective than those that do not.

These risk takers indicate that they are aware of the health risks associated with drinking, but for the present, they don't believe they are in any danger. Brett B. said, "I've thought about the health risks involved with drinking more than anything else, but I'm young now. You're thinking about 'who knows what my liver's gonna look like in 20 years or whatever?' Right now I figure I'm young. Nothing can happen right now, so I'm not gonna stop until I have to really become responsible." These risk takers do not make strong connections between today and tomorrow. To be convinced that today's behaviors will cause tomorrow's health problems, these risk takers will need to have a dramatic demonstration of the causal linkages.

H22: Messages to rebels that argue that today's drinking leads to tomorrow's liver are more likely to be effective than those that do not draw a direct causal linkage.

d) AIDS and Sex Go Together . . .

When asked what they would do to alert others to health risks associated with their lifestyles, there were several comments about sexual behaviors. Brent A. said, "I'd start first with sex man. 'Wrap that rascal.' Cause, you know, you got to be careful nowadays." With regard to a comment about AIDs, Mark B. said, "It scares the hell out of me." Brett B. added, "I try to think--know the person first." Billy B. agreed, "The scare of AIDS has really taken its toll. Everyone, I think, people are more aware of it now--safer sex than before." John B. disagreed, "Maybe not everyone." Billy B. replied, "Maybe not everyone, but I remember when AIDS first came out everyone tried to blow it off." Mark B. added, "People said, 'Oh, it's just another venereal disease. We'll cure it sooner or later.' You hear about it everyday on the TV, on the radio, in the paper." Billy B. went on, "Like opposed to like the beginning of the eighties when AIDS wasn't so relevant. I don't think venereal diseases crossed people's mind when they were about to engage in sex and now I think everyone--it crosses their mind one way or another. I mean it's just a lot more dangerous." Following a question about sex, Brent A. said, "Oh yeah, that's a definite no. Especially at college man, jeez. There's so many people here, you don't know what's going on."

H23: Messages about AIDS that stress direct ties to sex and stress that sex should scare you; if AIDS scares you, will be more successful than those that do not.

Several of the group members talked about perceiving sexually transmitted diseases differently now. They are strongly aware of the "social" nature of STD's. Mike A. said, "I'm taking that class, Human Sexuality, and we just went over like sexually transmitted diseases, and like how many cases there are on campus and all that shit. You know, I'm so scared now. You know, it's like always have protection." Billy B. reported, "I saw a commercial where they show this man and this woman in this bed, then it was talking about, you know, that you've slept with every person they've slept with for the past seven years and the focus on the camera started enlarging and there were two people in the bed next to them and it kept getting bigger and bigger and it was like the size of a football field and there were beds filled with people, just two people and couples. . . " Mark B. also reflected on the use of advertising for sexual risks, "You know what else is good is they're advertising Trojan condoms on the radio now and you used to never hear that." These are risk takers who recognize that they and others are "social" beings who have many contacts with many people.

H24: Messages about sexually transmitted diseases that emphasize the "social" nature of individuals will be more likely to receive the attention of the rebel than do messages that present the risk taker as basically isolated.

Message and Information Strategies That Should Work

1) Shock 'em--Sock 'em

There was a strong consensus that the best way to get the attention of people like themselves was to use messages that had a high fear or shock value. Andy A. in response to a question about the best way to get attention, responded, "Shock." [Moderator: "Shocking? What? Statistical shocking?"] "Yeah or like actual cases."[17] Jane B. gave an example of a "shocking" advertisement, "Another real effective one used to be the commercial about cocaine, the seductive voice that said would you steal for me--?" Billy B. ended her sentence, "Die for me?" Jane B. added, "Now that caught my attention as an unrestrained person. It scared the hell out of me. But it probably takes a jolt."

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[17] Tom D.: "Well, of course you're going to use something that's vivid, shocking, you know. Show contrasts. I mean you want to grab the person's attention. You don't want to have some paragraph like this and then have all the stuff at the end. . . . You want to just come out and shock them right away. Shock approach. Bring 'em in with ya. That's how ya gotta do it."

John B.: "Just something that shocks."

Billy B.: "Well that's what probably works."

Lisa D.: "I don't know exactly what I would do, but I guess grabbing someone's attention by shocking them would work."

John D.: "Well, definitely the key to solve the problem is to get the people's attention and like you said, the best way to do this is to shock them. You know, put up a big billboard and say 'Wake up and smell the roses.' And have a bunch of dead roses on top of a pile of garbage or something. But you have to get people's attention before you can actually get to work on the problem."

The group members gave several examples of messages they found shocking. Mark said, "Like those drunk driving videos, when they used to come up and they'd show like people, like bloody people strewn across the car. Those worked pretty well." . . . "The one's where they dissect the lung and show it after like two packs a day for thirty days." John A said, "The one I think was the best . . . was for smoking--with a mother's unborn baby where it was a fetus smoking a cigarette. I think that's pretty effective." Andy A. mentioned an advertisement showing a woman's wrinkled face, "There was an ad in the [student paper] the other day." Tina A. interjected, "The girl's face--" Andy A.: "I've seen that. It's so gross." Andy A. also recalled the ad, "It shocked me though. . . . If you just throw up statistics or whatever, I mean I'm not gonna listen to that."[18]

These rebels indicated that actual, or "real" examples tended to be most shocking to them. Mike A. said, "Put like examples that, you know tangible examples that I can see." Lisa D.: "Like those drunk driving commercials where somebody crashes." Joy D.: "Like smoking. I'd show a picture of a lung, cuz a lot of people don't know what it's going to look like. And I'd just show 'em what it really was." John D.: "People have a tendency to believe things more when they see it." Joy D., "Like see it live. Have a cadaver of something." Tom D. added, "You don't want to just reach in and tap their emotions. You want to reach their mind. Really, you don't want to just reach 'em, you want to reach 'em. You've got to touch them somehow. I don't know what level emotionally, maybe that wasn't the right thing to say, but you really just have to touch them through the mind."

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[18] Tom D.: "I think that's the perfect--"

Lisa D.: "Approach."

Tom D.: "Approach, yeah. . . . Not to where they're appalled. I'd want to shock them to where 'Whoa, I didn't know that. Where have I been?' I want to shock them to where they're interested and to where they realize, 'Hey, I've been in the dark.' I want to open their eyes. That's what you want to do. Grab them and open their eyes in a nice way so you don't alienate yourself from them."

H25: Messages with high shock or fear value using "real" people will be more likely to receive the attention of the rebel than will messages with low or moderate fear with actors.

2) Fine 'em, Jail 'em, Tax 'em

In addition to shock, several focus group members suggested that pointing out the punishment for law breaking would be an effective way to get their attention. Michael C. said, "I agree with Mary in a way. I like statistics. But I also agree with her because whether I hear statistics or not, if I feel like doing it, I'm going to do it. If I don't feel like doing it, I won't do it. It doesn't matter whether it's harmful to me or not. I'm only hurting myself. No one else--hopefully. . . . All my life I've drank and drive-drove. Still do. I'll get a beer after work or I'll go to PJ's and have a couple of beers and drive home. But boy have I cut down, lots, lots and lots. Only from fear and from what maybe I could do to someone else. . . . I think the tougher laws are what scares the hell out of people. " Sonya C. agreed, "I think they do. . . . 'But you know, the average 'Joe' knowing how much it would really cost, in terms of losing their license and financially with the fines and the attorney and all that stuff. It would probably make someone think twice about doing it." Mary C. concurred, "Well I would just like to add, since this Oct. lst, the laws have gotten stricter and when I go out with people, I'm pregnant and not drinking, but I get very upset and tell them what's going to happen. 'You're going to lose your license if you get pulled over. . . . What are you going to do? How are you going to go to school? How are you going to go to work? How are you going to do anything when you're relying on cars?' So I think the stricter they make the rules and enforce them--that the problem, enforcing them. . . . But if they would make the rules, enforce them, I think there'd be a lot fewer people getting DUI's."

H26: Messages to the rebel will be more persuasive if they point out vividly and graphically the fines or punishments associated with the risk than if they do not discuss these types of consequences.

3) Seeking The Latest Scoop

These group members indicated that they are likely to seek out current information when they have a question. Billy B. said he'd go to the, "Library. If it was something I really wanted to find out about, I'd go look it up and see what the newest research is on it." Jane B. also would seek information, "Through the library and through related things on different media and, however, I think stuff is too old by the time it gets to television." Brett B. agreed, "I'd just go to the library for the articles." John B. also would information seek in other ways, "If you had question, I'd think you'd call some place too. Look and try to find a number. . . . and you usually can find what group is telling you that and you can call them."

H27: Messages to the rebel will be more persuasive if they stress the currentness or timeliness of the information than if they do not.

The Rebel and The Mass Media

1) Just the Facts, Just the Facts

When asked about the type of information they would seek, there was a strong emphasis on "facts or data." Tom D. suggested, "When you have these shocking commercials, have a toll-free number or outlet of allowing them to be educated . . . These people are going to have enough, whatever, to get up and use the phone and call a toll-free number. If you do shock the people and get them involved, they will make that phone call." Mary C.: "Me personally, I like to hear statistics and facts. That does a lot more for me than, 'This is your brain on drugs.' Maybe for my age group or something. But if someone tells you to stay out of the sun, you're going to get skin cancer, I'd like to know what the chances are for something like that to happen. . . . So, personally, I would just like to hear--it would be a very boring commercial, but just what the facts are." Andy A. indicated that having written information was preferable to televised information, "Whereas, if you have a newspaper article or a magazine or something, you can read all the facts and then you may think about it more. If all the facts aren't there, you may think about it more and then go out and try to find out for yourself, but you know it's more sensible." Brent A. agreed and made an analogy to a VCR, "And if you don't understand it the first time you read it, you can put it down next to the chair and a little later, you can come back and read it again. . . .

Sort of rewind." Brett B. also preferred written materials, "I'd probably go with articles, really up-to-date articles to find out something I didn't know." Billy B. agreed, "Journals like Newsweek and stuff. Medical journals."

When asked where else they would seek information, Billy B. said, "The most effective for me would probably be television. I hear about a major topic first on TV. . . " Brett B.: ". . . if a special on that subject came on TV, I'd definitely watch it." Joy D.: "Pretty much like, the TV, cuz they promote more, talk more about it. So you start thinking more about it and realizing more what's going on. . . . they could do better, I think. Tell us more than what they really do . . . let out more information that they're really not supposed to. But I mean, really tell us the real truth, instead of changing things around."

A couple of group members indicated that radio would be likely to reach them. Mark B. said, "I think I'd hear it on the radio first cause I have the radio playing all day at work . . ." Jane B.: "And in your car."

Many of the focus group members were critical of the media for not providing "true" facts. Mark A. was critical of TV because it was not, "A little bit of more non-partial--just kind of more facts. . . . So it's like, maybe, people want to see what is actually going on. You know, pretty much of whatever you see on TV is going to be edited in some way. Maybe people want to see what the real facts are. . . You know, they come out with all this research, like this causes cancer, that causes cancer. What really does cause cancer? You know. I think people would like a little bit more." Billy B. added, "We find that the people who are supposed to be interpreting the news are interpolating it. . . . Interpolating. Putting their color on the story to put it across their way. . . . Well, I think they try to get the ratings." John B. is also skeptical of TV and newspapers, "What it boils down to is ratings. Some can't survive if ABC is getting better ratings. They're trying to agree to get you to go along so you'll go, 'yeah, yeah' and keep watching. Cuz sometimes you can get turned off by it. You can get turned off by the news and not agree with it and say it's wrong and turn it off. So they want to go along with what the people are thinking." Andy A.: "See, I don't really care for what I see on TV, on the news. I'll watch it, but like he said, you're so scared about it because they'll give you a report on something that's happening in about thirty seconds, or a minute possibly. How can you possible see anything but what they want you to see?"

H28: Messages to the rebel are more likely to be persuasive if they are printed messages with a heavy dependence on factual information and statistics.

2) Debate is Vital

Along with concern about TV news biases, several focus group members mourned the loss of two-newspaper communities for "facts." Jane B. said, "I think it's sad that newspapers in Florida, that there is not a single town in Florida that has a two-newspaper system. It's all just a mess, they have no competition. . . . In Washington, you have the Washington Post, the Washington Times which gives you two contrasting views." Billy B. was not quite as pessimistic, "In Miami, it's like the Miami Herald and then you have things like the Sun Tab. . . . if you're down in Miami, if you get one paper, your friend can get the other so there is competition there." Jane B.: "An unbiased view. Well not from one newspaper, but at least you have two contrasting opinions represented by two different newspapers and you can read both of them to form a middle-of-the-road opinion for yourself."

H29: The more the message to the rebel presents contrasting views, the more likely it is to be persuasive.

3) Quality Newspapers Are Read

The moderator of one group asked about newspaper use by beginning with a question of whether or not they buy a newspaper. Jane B. said, "Yes, every day." Mark B. added, "I'd say about five days a week. . . . If I don't buy it, someone else at work has, so it gets passed around." Ted B. said, "I get it delivered, so about every day."

These risk takers have strong appreciation for quality newspapers. Jay A. said his favorite paper was, "The Miami Herald. I miss it." "Sure." Mark A. reported, "Well I used to get the Tribune. . . But I do like the Miami Herald. It is a good paper." Andy A. indicated his favorite was, "The St. Pete Times." Brent A. added: "Well I get it here." Craig A. liked The Wall Street Journal.

H30: Although generally the rebel is a skeptic with regard to the media, they are much more likely to be persuaded by a message in a "quality" newspaper than a local paper.

4) News is Necessary

When asked about their favorite television programming, national news again emerged as a strong draw for the rebel. Several focus group members indicated they watch CNN. Mark A. said "I watch CNN. I like that channel at lot." Andy A. agreed, "The only reason I almost got cable was because I wanted CNN. I wanted TBS, and I wanted ESPN." Mark A. added, "Got to have those both." A desire for non-local news was expressed several times. Jane B. said, "I have great trust in Peter Jennings. I think he tells the truth." Mark B. said he watched, "World news." Billy B. agreed, "Yeah, the world news is a lot better than watching the local news." Mark B. added, Yeah, local news is piddly. CNN is good too because they're constantly updating it. . . . I think shows like 20/20 are good. I mean they're not always giving you like news news, but they're always uncovering something that you need to know about, or you don't need to know about it to get by in your own life, but it's nice to know that these atrocities are going on somewhere." Craig A.: "I just started watching The Discovery Channel." Mike A.: "Every once in a while I get hooked on like a nature show or something. I just like watching all these little animals run around and stuff."

Some focus group members indicated that they judged the importance of an issue by whether or not it was on the national or world news. John B. said, "But if you think it's important enough for all of NBC to be playing, at least you think it's important enough to listen to." Mark B. agreed, "That's true. If it's being played all over the nation, then it must have some kind of significance."

H31: Messages about risk topics currently in the national news are more likely to be persuasive to the rebel than are messages that are not covered widely.

5) Twin Peaks is the Pick

Focus group members showed a high degree of concurrence about their favorite TV shows, Jay A. said, "You know what I think I'm addicted to? Twin Peaks." Brent A. added "Yeah." Andy A. said, "Yeah." Mark A. said, "I watch Twin Peaks too." Jay A. indicated, "That's excellent." Mark A. said, "It's great. It's funny. It's funny. It's really funny."

H32: Advertising time for the television show Twin Peaks will be more likely to receive the attention of rebels than will other entertainment programming.

6) Cartoons are Pretend

There was several comments from these focus group members indicating they enjoyed cartoons, particularly because they are not "real." Brent A. said, "I like cartoons because they're not real. . . . I like on Saturday morning, 'Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure.' I just watch whatever's on--Bugs Bunny or what ever just cuz it's not real. They can do anything they want you know." Andy A. added, "Have you seen the cartoons they have before the movies with, what's that, "Baby Herman?" Brent A.: "Yeah." Andy A.: "That's cool." Mike A.: "They have the best animation in those cartoons." Mark A. indicated he too liked "unrealistic" cartoons, "I don't like the new cartoons. . . . They're trying to be too realistic. They're not faking it." Another group member, Mike A. when talking about movies, also indicated a great appreciation for special effects, "I liked Close Encounters of the Third Kind, cause it was the best damn special effects movie ever made at its time."

H33: Messages with "cartoon" characters who have few limits on their abilities are more likely to receive the attention of rebels than will messages with "real" characters.

7) Action, Sex, and Violence Hustle the Rebel

When asked about the kind of movies they prefer, the focus group members indicated that they like action-adventure movies. Craig A. said, "Sex, violence." Diane C. also liked sensual movies, "Pretty Woman, because it was sensual." Mary C. added, "And I liked it because it had a--it was an upbeat movie with a good ending for a change." Sonya C.: "I like the movie, Total Recall, because for two reasons. It was an exciting movie despite all the violence, and Arnold Schwartzenegger is not so bad to watch for an hour and a half." Mike A. said, "Action-adventure movies." Jay A. added, "Stevan Segal Hall" Tina A: "I like Die Hard." Brent A.: "I like Hunt for Red October because it was like a suspense thriller." Jay A.: "I saw, what was that one, this movie with Harrison Ford in it as the lawyer?" Andy A.: "That was a good movie." Mike A.: "Another suspense thriller." Andy A.: "I like movies that can make you think a little bit. I saw The Two Jakes. It was the hardest movie I ever like tried to follow. It felt like I was in an economics class. . . . But it was kind of neat too because at the end, when they exposed everything, everything made sense. I just went, 'wow.' I didn't ever think of that you know."

H34: Messages that are associated with action-adventure programming are more likely to receive the attention of rebels than will messages in more passive programming.

8) Put It On The Wall

Finally, several of these risk takers suggested that "point-of-risk-encounter messages" would be effective. Mark B. said, "Target the masses' hang out. If you're talking about AIDS, the bathroom. If you're talking about alcohol, hey maybe you've got to advertise against alcohol in a bar." John B.: "Yeah, they have signs up against drunk driving." Mark B.: "You know if it takes a sign by the exit of the bar reminding you about drunken driving or something." John B.: "Yeah, some bars have breathalyzers. Like you can take a breathalyzer test and just mess around with it . . ." Billy B.: "That's a good idea." John B.: "It's only fifty cents to do it and have fun with it." Ted B.: "In a bar against drinking because a lot of people drink and drive." Brett B.: "Work, oh yeah in the work place. . . . If you're a smoker, sometimes in the stores next to the cigarette packs, just to remind you, 'Hey, listen, it's giving you cancer.'" John B: "Or maybe on a twelve pack of beer, if they could ever do something like that." Mark B.: "Just remember, kidneys don't come in six packs." Jane B.: "Like bags in a grocery store or liquor store on whatever."

H35: Messages to the rebellious risk taker that are close both in time and space to the actual risk itself will be more likely to be persuasive than those that are distant.

THE REBEL, IN THEORY

One of the assumptions of the authors is that all individuals attempt to gain control over their own environment and that different behaviors emerge to maintain that control. The rebellious risk taker takes risks in order to maintain a self-perception of being creative and going to the "edge" without being too extreme. The following section summarizes the theoretical assumptions the authors have generated about the rebel from these focus groups and from earlier studies.

The rebel is a complex risk taker. They like to think and they distrust messages that do not cover the many sides of an issue or are from authoritative sources. Messages to rebels should encourage thoughtfulness and internal debate. These risk takers values their own creativeness, boldness, socialness, respect for the rights of others, and their skepticism of any absolutes or rules. This risk taker wants to make his or her own choices and maintain a self-identity of being in control. Messages to the rebel will be more effective if they recognize these self-perceptions of these individuals. These risk takers respect sound "cause and effect" arguments and want to understand the connections or links between behaviors and results. If there is a direct punishment for a behavior, they want to be reminded of exactly what that is, in concrete terms. Messages to these risk takers should specify the fine or punishment for breaking the law. The rebel has strong concerns about the environment and health generally, but not their own health. Because these risk takers are cognitively complex and both integrate and differentiate their behaviors, they are able to discount rather effectively the relationship between their own behaviors, and their own personal health. On the other hand, they see strong links between many of their behaviors such as smoking and drinking, for example. They also believe that there are very different effects for each of these behaviors. Messages to these risk takers about things such as smoking and drinking, or AIDS and sex should be integrated. Smoking and drinking, for example, go together in the minds of the rebel and change in one behavior may require change in another.

The rebel likes sensation and stimulation. Messages to these risk takers need to be vibrant, controversial, active and contain "real" shock. There risk takers will not respond to what they believe are "actors" pretending to hold a particular view. They want to see "real" victims and "live" representations of effects of risk behavior. If unreal characters are used, they should be "weird and wacky" and capable of superhuman behavior.

Rules and regulations invite this risk taker to break them, but the key to communication with rebels is to understand how important it is for them to interact with others like themselves. These are risk takers who will smoke if others are smoking and refrain from smoking if it offends others, even those they don't know. These risk takers do not want to be social outcasts. They respond strongly to the plight of others. They will be much more likely to be moved by the effects of risks on other "real" people than they will hypothetical or abstracts risks. The video camera approach to recording "real" risk is made for these folks. They are much more likely to respond to news clips of the effects of a risk on other people than they will to sophisticated and technically well done PSA's or advertisements. On the other extreme, however, these risk takers will be captivated by "wacky cartoon" characters who are operating far outside the possibility of reality. "Roger Rabbit" advertising is made for these folks

Information for this risk taker must be current, unbiased, and factual. They do not trust sources unless the source has an impeccable reputation and the message can be verified with other sources. Choices of "channels" for messages to this risk taker need to be made with full comprehension that some channels have very little credibility with these risk takers. For example, these risk takers have very little respect for local news media.

LIMITATIONS

All research, regardless of the methodology, has its own limitations. Focus group-generated findings, no doubt, have more than just about any other method, short of an individual case study. The individuals surveyed here were all members of "convenience" samples. They were purposively selected from purposively selected groups--the external validity of any of these results must be continually challenged. In addition, these hypotheses were developed based upon about six hours of interviews with 18 people, using inexperienced focus group moderators. At best what should be said about these data is that they can suggest hypotheses for more rigorous testing.

The strength of these findings, on the other hand, is that the authors have previously conducted several empirical studies with rebels and the hypotheses presented here are generally logically consistent with that work. These focus groups suggested several new insights to motives of the rebel and to message strategies that might be successful with rebels. The next step is to encourage others to test these hypotheses and to continue to develop the theory of how to communicate effectively with rebellious risk takers.

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Public Relations Expression and the First Amendment: Exploring the Boundaries of Protection

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Although the evolution of commercial speech case law and its implications for the practice of public relations has been a topic of concern for some communication scholars (Pratt, 1990; Walsh, 1986), not enough attention has been paid to an area that could have a profound impact on the way public relations practitioners practice their profession.

As Pratt (1990) notes, although the U.S. Supreme Court has not yet ruled on a First Amendment case that involves public relations activities specifically, it is likely that when such a case does arise, the Court will extend an already developed area of law that is similar, such as commercial speech, rather than creating new law.[1]

A likely area for such a case to arise concerns the Food and Drug Administration and its regulatory authority over the pharmaceutical industry. Since 1982, the FDA has taken regulatory action against pharmaceutical companies' public relations activities in more than 20 instances. Actions have included fines, official citations and corrective orders to three companies for "false and misleading" press kit materials; issuance of a warning letter to a company that paid for a press conference called by a researcher to announce preliminary results of an ongoing drug study; and issuance of a warning letter to a company that had sponsored a series of medical seminars, which the agency said violated rules concerning exchange of information regarding investigational drugs.

In each instance, the pharmaceutical company in question has complied with FDA demands for corrective action. Although the FDA does have the power to regulate prescription drug advertising, many companies have questioned whether the agency has the power to regulate public relations activities.

An FDA official has said publicly that the agency believes public relations activity by pharmaceutical companies is commercial speech and thus subject to its regulation.

This paper will examine this issue in light of developments in commercial speech case law, particularly at the Supreme Court level. The author will provide a brief review of the development of commercial speech as a legal concept and how the Court has differentiated between commercial and fully protected speech.

This paper will then review five instances of FDA regulatory action against pharmaceutical companies' public relations activities to provide examples of what kinds of activities concern the FDA and how those concerns have widened over the past nine years.

Finally, the paper will discuss how the U.S. Supreme Court might view such public relations activities in light of their decisions in commercial speech cases. The author offers a modified "test" that the Court could apply in helping to determine whether specific kinds of public relations activities are deserving of full protection under the First Amendment, or less protection because they fall under the commercial speech umbrella.

Commercial Speech: Its Evolution as a Legal Concept

Commercial speech case law dates from 1942, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a New York statute that prohibited the distribution of any "handbill, circular...or any other advertising matter whatsoever in or upon any street (**Valentine v. Christensen**)." In a similar case heard in 1951, the Court upheld the conviction of an individual who had violated an ordinance that prohibited door-to-door solicitation of magazine subscriptions (**Breard v. Alexandria**). Through the decisions in these two cases, the Supreme Court took the position that commercial expression was not entitled to First Amendment protection.

But in 1975 the Court modified its stance and began to offer limited protection for commercial speech.

In **Bigelow v. Virginia**, the Supreme Court said that advertising was entitled to some First Amendment protection. The Court said the "relationship of speech to the marketplace of products or services does not make it valueless in the marketplace of ideas (1975)."

The case involved an advertisement in a university newspaper for an abortion referral service. The ad violated a Virginia statute that prohibited the publication of ads that encouraged or promoted abortion. The Court reversed the conviction of the editor of the student newspaper.

The U.S. Supreme Court began to refine its definition of commercial speech in a decision a year later. In **Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council**, the Court nullified a state statute that forbade pharmacists from advertising prescription drug prices, noting that information such as this had value to the consumer (1976). In striking down the statute, the Court said that commercial speech, or "speech that proposes a commercial transaction," was deserving of some protection. However, commercial speech that is false or misleading may be regulated by the state (1976: 1830).

That consumers have a right to receive certain kinds of information like that classified as commercial speech was the emphasis in a number of cases involving advertisement of professional services.

In a narrow 5-4 decision, the Court said in **Bates v. State of Arizona** that "advertising by attorneys may not be subject to blanket suppression (1977: 350)." This decision effectively struck down the long-standing tradition of no advertising by attorneys, but did not really help to clarify further just what constitutes commercial speech.

That same year the Court found in **Ohralik v. Ohio State Bar Association** that a lawyer's in-person solicitation of a client constituted commercial speech and therefore had "a limited measure of protection commensurate with its subordinate position in the scale of First Amendment values (1977:456)."

In a key case in 1980, the Supreme Court further clarified the distinction between commercial and fully protected speech. The Court also laid out a four-step procedure on which courts could analyze whether regulations on commercial speech violated the First Amendment.

In **Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation v. Public Service Commission**, the Court held that a state regulation that banned utilities from advertising to promote electricity use violated that utility's First Amendment rights (1980:565). In attempting to delineate the differences between commercial and free speech, the Court described commercial speech as "speech related solely to the economic interests of both the speaker and the speaker's audience (p. 561)." The Court noted that, "Commercial expression not only serves the economic interest of the speaker, but also assists consumers and furthers the societal interest in the fullest possible dissemination of information (p. 561)."

In deciding commercial speech cases, the Court said, a court must examine four areas: First, to receive (limited) protection under the First Amendment, commercial speech must concern lawful activity and must not be misleading. If the court finds this to be the case, then it must determine whether the asserted government interest (in regulating the speech in question) is substantial. Then, the court must determine whether the regulation (that affected the speech) directly advances the government interest asserted, and finally; whether the regulation is more extensive that necessary to serve that interest (p. 566).

The Supreme Court acknowledged in a 1983 decision that determining whether certain speech is commercial or fully protected is not always easy. One problematic area was whether the speech in question involved matters of public concern or interest. In **Bolger et al. v. Youngs Drug Products Corp.**, the Court said that advertising that links a product to important public issues or topics currently under discussion does not necessarily give it full protection under the First Amendment (p. 68).

The case involved a federal statute that prohibited the mailing of unsolicited ads for contraceptives. The Youngs Co., manufacturers of Trojan condoms, mailed informational pamphlets and advertisements to members of the public; the materials--particularly the pamphlets--discussed the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and the importance of using condoms to help reduce the spread of disease.

In making its determination that the speech in question was commercial speech, the Court examined each of the pieces mailed. Most of the material included in the mailing fit the "core notion of commercial speech--`speech which does no more than propose a commercial transaction,'" said the Court (p. 64).

But the informational pamphlets could not be so easily categorized, it added. "The mere fact that these pamphlets are conceded to be advertisements does not compel the conclusion that they are commercial speech (p. 66)." Neither does the fact that reference was made to a specific product or the fact that Youngs clearly is economically motivated. But, said the Court, the combination of these factors provides strong support for their being labeled commercial speech, regardless of their discussion of sexually transmitted diseases (p.66).

In a 5-4 decision in 1986, the Court decided a case that seemed on the surface to contract the limited protection that commercial speech cases had won to this point. However, the case has not had much effect on later decisions by the Court. In **Posadas de Puerto Rico Associates v. Tourism Co. of Puerto Rico**, the Court said that Puerto Rico could legally ban gambling casino advertising directed at residents of the island even though the advertising was truthful, in an effort to reduce the demand for casino gambling among that population. Advertising for casino gambling in Puerto Rico was allowed outside the island to help get tourist trade. This decision seemed to indicate that the four-part test enunciated in Consolidated Edison did not offer substantial protection to commercial speech that was not false or misleading.

In its most recent decision involving commercial speech, the Supreme Court in Board of Trustees of State University of New York v. Fox (1989) seemed to narrow its definition of what constitutes commercial speech. The case involved a written policy of the University that prohibited private commercial enterprises from operating in university facilities. A Tupperware party held in a student's dorm room was stopped by the campus police. The salesperson was arrested and charged with trespass, soliciting without a permit and loitering (p. 3028).

The Court struck down the university policy. In its discussion, the Court stated that commercial speech is that "which proposes specific commercial transactions, which is the test for identifying commercial speech (1989:3031)."

In its decision, the Court excluded "paid speech providing job counseling, tutoring, legal advice and medical consultation," from the commercial speech category (p. 3029).

A recent lower court decision since the **Board of Trustees v. Fox** case seems to indicate that the lower courts may be more willing to find some types of speech fully protected, rather than commercial. In **New York Public Interest Research Group v. Insurance Information Institute** (NY Supreme Court, Appellate Division, May 1990) the court found that advertising by an insurance industry association, which discussed issues such as malpractice and insurance costs, was fully protected under the First Amendment. The Insurance Institute, which was described by the court as "basically a mouthpiece for the insurance industry," ran a series of paid advertisements on television and selected magazines that discussed the problems associated with the rise in civil law suits. Plaintiff in the case, a consumer advocate organization, said the ads were false, misleading and deceptive. In its decision in favor of the Insurance Institute, the court said, "While purely commercial speech, although entitled to certain constitutional safeguards, can be subject to scrutiny under false advertising and deceptive practices statues, the critical factor in determining if particular speech may be regulated or barred by government is whether it proposes a commercial transaction (17 MLR, 1976)."

Citing **Board of Trustees v. Fox,** the court said, "Speech is not necessarily commercial simply because it is economically motivated or reflects the interest of a commercial enterprise or even if it is paid for by a profit-making entity." The ads in question attempted to influence voters, public officials and citizens to "increase sympathy for the concerns of the insurance industry..." As such it was "precisely the sort of free debate which the First Amendment was intended to safeguard."

In summary, this brief review of commercial speech cases decided by the Supreme Court indicates that in recent years the Court has narrowed its definition of what constitutes commercial speech. Furthermore, all commercial speech cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court to date have dealt with advertising of some kind. Does this mean that the Court would view public relations expression as more deserving of full protection under the First Amendment? Before we discuss how the Court might apply commercial speech law to public relations activities, particularly public relations activities by pharmaceutical companies, We will examine how the FDA has applied its regulatory powers over prescription drug advertising and labeling to public relations.

The FDA and its Regulatory Authority

The FDA is the federal regulatory agency charged with reviewing and approving for marketing prescription and over-the-counter drugs. And, since 1962 when the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act was amended, it has had authority to review advertising for prescription drugs to make certain it is not false and misleading (21 CFR 312).

Public relations activities are not mentioned in that Act, so when the FDA first began to regulate public relations efforts by pharmaceutical companies, it did so by applying existing regulations from the advertising and labeling sections of the act. Section 201(m) of the Act defines labeling as, "All labels and other written, printed, or graphic matter (1) upon any article or any of its containers or wrappers, or (2) accompanying such article (21 CFR 312)." Section 502 (n) cites specific requirements for prescription drug advertising.

The FDA has the authority to declare a drug misbranded, which could result in the agency can actually seizing the drug product and preventing it from being sold. Section

502(a) of the Code states that a drug "shall be deemed to be misbranded if its labeling is false and/or misleading in any particular."

Before a drug receives approval for marketing from the FDA, the pharmaceutical company and the agency agree on wording for the information that appears on the product label and on the package insert. Typically, information about how the drug should be used, who should take it, and potential adverse effects is included. These statements are also used by pharmaceutical sales representatives and for advertising copy in medical journals (Salitsky, 1984).

Much of the public relations activities occur at the time of a new drug's approval for marketing by the FDA. More recently, public relations activities may occur while drug studies in humans are being conducted. Preliminary results of drug testing in humans may be reported in medical and scientific journals, or may even receive wider coverage in the lay press, as has been the case in recent years with a number of important drugs.

The FDA's claim that public relations activities are labeling and subject to content regulation dates from 1982 when FDA official Kenneth Feather said in a speech to the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association that the FDA began to treat press releases and press kits as labeling when pharmaceutical companies started to release information about new drugs to the public that it considered inappropriate (1982). In recent months, said Feather, a number of press releases issued by companies about new drugs contained false and misleading information. And, while the FDA did not want to regulate all press kits and require pre-clearance of public relations materials, "We want it known that the FDA feels these press releases are labeling....(1982)."

Feather made clear that the FDA considered press releases to be commercial speech, noting that, "They (the Supreme Court) have firmly established that commercial free speech can be regulated to make sure it is truthful and not misleading." (1982)

The first significant instance of FDA regulatory action over a pharmaceutical company's public relations activities occurred in 1982, when the FDA ordered Eli Lilly to issue a press release correcting an earlier release it had sent out about its newly approved arthritis drug.

A short time after the drug was approved for marketing by the FDA, the agency received reports of a number of deaths of people who had been taking the prescription drug. The FDA was concerned that the people who died had not been good candidates for taking the drug, but had received the drug because they put pressure on their physicians after hearing positive reports about it in the media.

In a regulatory letter to the pharmaceutical company, the FDA said that it was evident from a review of media coverage about the drug that the company had communicated false and misleading information to the public through its press kit materials, which it said constituted misbranding of the drug. The FDA ordered Lilly to issue a corrective press release to all media outlets that had received the first press kit materials. More than 6,000 were distributed. (Halperin, 1982)

In reply to the FDA order, Lilly's legal counsel stated that it was the company's opinion that the FDA had incorrectly applied labeling regulations to press kit materials, therefore making it inappropriate for the FDA to regulate that material. Counsel cited a passage from a 1978 FDA draft of working guidelines on company press releases for new drugs, which reads: "Press releases which mention prescription drugs by brand or generic name will not be regulated as promotional communications (eg. advertisement or promotional labeling) unless the pharmaceutical supplier (or persons acting on their behalf) makes or offers payment for the insertion into any media, in which case it will be regulated as some form of advertising (advertisement of promotional labeling). Also regarded as advertising will be press releases that fail to label investigational uses and unapproved claims as such or which is not representative of what is known or should reasonably be known to the sponsor about the product discussed (Purvis, 1982)."

Lilly's counsel acknowledged that media reports may have exaggerated the effectiveness of the drug. But, he stated, "...media reports which may be oversimplified or erroneous are, to some extent, unavoidable whenever reporters write for laymen about complex scientific and medical matters. The only sure way of preventing this situation would be to ban the issuance of such information to the media, a course of action that would obviously be foreclosed by the First Amendment." (Halt, 1982) Lilly's counsel added that Lilly did not pay the media to use the press kit materials they were sent.

Before this case was resolved, Lilly pulled the drug off the market and the FDA rescinded its order for corrective action.

In 1986, the FDA acted against another company's press kit materials when it ordered ICN Pharmaceuticals, Inc., to take remedial action to correct information contained within a release. The release concerned a drug just approved by the FDA for use in infants with severe respiratory viral infections. In its letter the FDA said that the release contained gross exaggerations of the drug's effectiveness and also discussed unapproved uses of the drug. The FDA letter stated that in its review of press kit materials before the drug was approved, the agency's staff had warned ICN that some of the material was not appropriate for the release (Rheinstein, 1986).

The FDA ordered ICN to issue a corrective press release, to be sent to all recipients of the first release. If a release was not forthcoming, the FDA said it would seize the product and prevent further sale of it.

In an article about the FDA actions taken against ICN in Medical Advertising News, a trade publication, an FDA staff member was quoted as saying, "The legality of considering press materials as part of the labeling of a drug, and thus under the same restraints, has never been tested in court (1986)." In that same article, a spokesperson for Hill and Knowlton, ICN's public relations firm and creators of the press kit, told the publication that her firm usually submitted a press kit to the FDA before it was distributed (1986).

Later that same year, FDA issued a warning letter to Upjohn for a press release it had sent out about its product Rogaine, a drug developed to treat people with heart conditions and approved by the FDA for that use. It was found in studies to have some effectiveness in growing hair on balding men. Upjohn's release reported on the results of the studies, which received extensive media coverage. The FDA said Upjohn's press release overstated the drug's effectiveness, and, "because this release was reported widely in the lay press, many potential users of the product received information which may have unrealistically raised their expectations about a drug still under investigation (Purvis, 1986)."

Upjohn replied that its release was sent out to report on results of a large study of the drug to members of the investing public. Because the drug showed significant effectiveness, these study results could have some impact on stock prices, which necessitated timely release of information under SEC regulations (Ishler, 1986). Nevertheless, Upjohn agreed not to issue further copies of the release. The FDA later approved Rogaine as a treatment for balding men.

ICN was the target once again when in 1987, the FDA seemed to expand its definition of what it considered to be labeling when it questioned the company about its relationship to **Pediatric Virology**, a medical journal that had published an article about the drug Virazole, which had been approved by the FDA in 1986. Although the drug was being tested for use in treating a variety of conditions, the FDA's approval in 1986 had limited its use to treatment of severe respiratory viral infections in infants. The journal article discussed some of the unapproved uses of the drug currently under study by researchers.

In its warning letter to the company about the journal article, the FDA stated that it considered the medical publication to be labeling under the FDC Act because, "...your firm provides sole sponsorship of the publication and the fact that editorial independence is suspect because of the close relationship of the publication's two editors to your firm." Both editors were researchers for ICN, said the FDA (Rheinstein, 1986).

ICN complied with FDA's requests. It said it would continue to support the publication financially, but stated it would not have any other involvement with the publication, including submission of articles to the journal by ICN employees. In its response to the agency ICN noted that, "ICN does provide financial support for the publication, but does not exercise any voice in its editorial policy or in the selection of articles for inclusion. ...Moreover, we believe ICN has the right to provide financial support to publications to ensure that physicians in this specialty area have access to information on current developments." (Staffa, 1987)

More recently, the FDA has turned attention to pharmaceutical company sponsorship of press conferences by researchers who wish to release information about drugs under study. As was the case in the Upjohn regulatory action, its concern is with pre-approval promotion of a drug.

The FDC Act gives the FDA authority over pre-approval promotion. A pharmaceutical company may not disseminate promotional material stating that a drug under investigation is safe or useful. However, the Act states that "this regulation is not intended to restrict the full exchange of scientific information concerning the drug, including dissemination of scientific findings in scientific or lay communications media..." (Subchapter D, Part 312.7, FDC Act) This exception raises questions about where scientific exchange ends and promotion begins.

The FDA took issue with a press conference held by a University of Michigan researcher to announce his findings of a study of Retin-A, a cream approved by the FDA for treatment of acne, but found to have beneficial effects on aging skin. Dr. John Voorhees' study examined use of the drug for repairing sun-damaged skin, which was at that time an unapproved use of the drug. Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation, makers of the drug, paid for the press conference.

The press conference was held the day after the **Journal of the American Medical Association** published an article on Dr. Voorhees' study of Retin-A.

The FDA objected to the press conference, stating that the researcher issued positive information about the results of one study for an unapproved use of the drug (Feather, 1988). In a regulatory letter to Ortho's legal counsel, the FDA stated, "Your firm, as the sponsor of Retin-A, is fully aware that it is illegal to promote a marketed drug for unapproved indications. While we understand that Dr. Voorhees was at liberty to hold a press conference and/or provide press materials on his own, your firm had the option of refusing to sponsor this activity (Feather, 1988)."

As a result of the FDA action, the company issued a press release to the media stating that it "wanted to put into perspective the widespread media interest in the past few days in a prescription skin cream that appears capable of improving the condition of skin aged by the sun (1988)." The release went on to say that the study was only one of several clinical trials of the drug and its effects on aging skin.

In summary, the FDA has stated quite clearly that it considers public relations activities to be commercial speech and, as such, subject to FDA regulation. That position was underscored by Kenneth Feather in a November 1988 speech. "Our position is that most company-sponsored public relations activities dealing with their product(s) can be considered to be promotional activities (i.e. commercial speech) which are subject to our regulation." He added, "We are considering cases on which to begin to take regulatory action based on that position."

Implications for Public Relations Activities

While there are no definitive guidelines that distinguish clearly between commercial and traditional free speech, an examination of the key cases provides broad characteristics of commercial speech. Most of the characteristics concern content of the speech in question; another characteristic concerns form. In the major decisions, the content of speech defined as commercial involves a message that promotes a demand for a product or service. It also typically refers to a specific product or service and may discuss its attributes, such as price and quality. However, in the **Board of Trustees v. Fox** case, the most recent commercial speech case decided by the Supreme Court, the Court said that commercial speech was that which proposed specific commercial transactions, which seems to narrow the type of speech that would fall into this category.

Based on these broad content characteristics, how might the Court view the FDA regulatory actions taken against pharmaceutical companies described earlier?

If the Court holds to its latest, more narrow definition of commercial speech, press kit materials and press conferences might be considered fully protected speech. But, if the Court adheres to its earlier definition--speech that promotes a demand for a product--then public relations activities such as those above most probably would be considered commercial speech.

While press kits about new products are distributed by organizations to help provide information to the media and the public, their purpose also is to promote a demand for a product. Such was the case in the Eli Lilly/Oraflex example mentioned earlier, and indeed, became the major focus of the controversy. As a **Time** magazine article noted in a story about the FDA action against Lilly, "Lilly had taken the bold course of promoting its product directly to the consumer, and the misleading claim was trumpeted in newspapers and on television (**Time**, Sept 27, 1982: 83)."

The story said that the widespread media coverage, based on press kit materials that implied the drug could retard the course of arthritis, caused a huge demand for the drug. However, in neither instance did the press materials concern a "specific commercial transaction." Press kit materials included background information about the specific drug's development, information on the companies and patient package inserts.

In the case of the Retin-A press conference, the media covered it widely. Soon after the press conference and the official FDA warning to Ortho, the company received agency approval to market the drug as a treatment for reducing wrinkles in sun-damaged skin. Physicians had been flooded with requests to prescribe it for their patients, who had read about the drug's positive effects in the media, which may have pressured the FDA into approving the drug for this use earlier than it might have.

The drug company claimed that information given out at the press conference fell into the category of exchange of scientific information, allowable under FDA regulations. Furthermore, the press conference was held by the researcher in response to media coverage generated by the issuance of a press release from the **Journal of the American Medical Association** that summarized an article in its upcoming issue about Retin-A and its positive effects on wrinkles.

While press kit materials for new drugs never contain price information, and never directly "sell" a product, nor does a press conference serve that purpose, the Court may view these activities as product promotion based on its decision in a key commercial speech case. As Pratt notes (1986), the word **promotional** was used to describe the advertising in the Central Hudson case; those advertisements were determined by the Court to be commercial speech. The FDA would agree strongly that activities such as these constitute promotion.

Furthermore, it may be that the Court sees the content of press releases about new drugs as potentially more serious than other types of stories, and therefore, subject to more stringent rules. In a 1985 case involving the Federal Trade Commission and its' regulation over nonprescription drug advertising, the Supreme Court upheld an FTC order that barred unsubstantiated advertisements of superiority claims for certain nonprescription drugs (**Sterling Drug Co. v. FTC**). The Court said, "when drug advertising is at issue, the potential health hazards may well justify a more sweeping order than would be proper were the Commission dealing with a less consequential area." Although this case dealt with advertising, the concern the Court had over potential health hazards to the public would be the same for public relations activities.

In terms of content, the FDA seems to have a weaker case when one examines its actions against ICN's sponsorship of the medical journal, **Pediatric Virology**. It doesn't appear that the purpose of the journal article about a study involving ICN's anti-viral drug was to promote a demand for the product, but rather to exchange information within the medical community about a new drug therapy and its potential uses. Also, the publics for information in a medical journal are trained medical professionals, not less well informed laypeople who may be unable to understand complex medical information.

The other characteristic of commercial speech involves the form in which that speech appears. The Court has noted in all of its commercial speech decisions that the speech in question was paid for by an organization. In almost all the cases, the speech was "advertising, pure and simple." As public relations practitioners know, a significant difference between advertising and public relations centers around the amount of control the organization has over its message. If an organization pays for ad space or time, the content of that ad is controlled (with certain very limited exceptions) by the organization. On the other hand, once an organization sends out a press release, for example, the media can modify that release anyway they see fit; they can even choose not to use any of the information contained in it. Members of the media are free to call the organization to get more information, clarify material or ask questions, just as they are able to do in a press conference situation.

Furthermore, a public relations person realizes the value of his/her credibility with the media. If a release is sent out with errors or exaggerations, media people may think twice about using that person's information. It behooves a public relations person to send out accurate, timely, newsworthy information.

This aspect of public relations activity, in contrast to advertising, may make a significant difference in how the

Court categorizes public relations expression in terms of its protection under the First Amendment. The freedom of the press to modify the organization's message may make such speech more deserving of full protection under the First Amendment. As Eli Lilly's counsel noted after the FDA issued a regulatory letter to the company about its arthritis drug, media reports may oversimplify or exaggerate information. Furthermore, it may be difficult for the media to translate complex scientific information into an understandable story for the lay public, even more so if the reporter has no background in medical reporting.

An example of exaggeration by the media occurred in USA Today's coverage of Upjohn's drug for baldness in men. Although the press release sent out by the company never stated that the drug was a cure for baldness, the USA Today story did say that. In its letter to Upjohn about the company's press release, the FDA said it felt this false conclusion by the newspaper "...was encouraged by the tone (emphasis added) of this Press Release." This kind of reasoning by the FDA can be frustrating for public relations people in the pharmaceutical industry, who not only must worry about what is or isn't actually stated in a release, but what might be inferred by the media or the public. With no clear guidelines as yet forthcoming from the FDA, there may be a tendency for companies to release less information for fear of being cited by the federal agency.

A Proposal for an Exclusion Rule for Determining if Speech is Commercial

The FDA historically has held a paternalistic attitude toward consumers. The drug industry in this country is arguably the most highly regulated in the world. Until recently, information about prescription drugs has been viewed by the FDA as best left to members of the medical profession. As an example, the Physicians' Desk Reference, a book that describes prescription drugs in great detail, was available only to physicians and pharmacists until recent years. Prescription drug advertising is highly regulated, and with few exceptions, is seen only in journals aimed at medical professionals.

Yet there is a high level of interest on the part of the public for health-related information. One study by a public relations agency found that as much as one-quarter of newspapers' newsholes were devoted to health stories (Dilenschneider, 1983: 10). It is also evident that pharmaceutical companies have responded to consumer interest by expanding their public relations efforts, particularly those efforts aimed at consumers through the media, rather than through the traditional channel, the physician. U.S. pharmaceutical companies now spend approximately $150 million a year on public relations activities (Hyman, 1990: 22). That amount may be reduced significantly if the FDA continues to curtail such activities.

Given the need and the desire for more information by the consumer, it seems that the question of ultimate control over the message content, which could be determined by whether the organization paid the media to use information, as it does in advertising, would serve as one valid test for determining whether the speech in question should be excluded from the commercial speech category. (There may be instances where certain kinds of advertising should be fully protected, as were the advertisements in **NY Public Interest Research Group v. Insurance Information Institute**, but press releases should be automatically excluded.)

As Justice Brennan noted in his dissent of the Court's decision in **Posadas**, "the First Amendment presupposes that people will perceive their own best interests if only they are well enough informed, and...the best means to that end is to open the channels of communication, rather than to close them."

For the most part, the pharmaceutical industry has been effective in policing itself. Since 1982, when the FDA first began to apply advertising and labeling regulations to public relations activities, there have been relatively few incidents where the federal agency has felt it necessary to regulate public relations activity, especially when one considers that nearly 100 new prescription drugs are approved for marketing each year.

Until a case comes before the courts that will test the authority of the FDA to regulate public relations expression of pharmaceutical companies, and that will delineate the amount of First Amendment protection offered public relations expression, the FDA seems ready and willing to go on the offensive. The agency's increased vigilance is evidenced by recent actions. A somewhat chilling trend has been that of the agency's "requests" to review a company's press kit materials before a drug is granted final approval by the agency. According to one legal counsel for a pharmaceutical company, even though the FDA has no authority to do so under the Code, it has become almost standard practice for the agency to ask for press kit materials as part of the approval process (Salitsky, 1989). As was noted in the Upjohn case, the spokesperson for the company's public relations agency said their agency had given the FDA press materials for prior review on a number of occasions. The ultimate outcome of this may be less information for the consumer at a time when significant breakthroughs in medicine, particularly the pharmaceutical field, are being made.

Footnote

[1] The Supreme Court has developed, to a lesser extent, a parallel doctrine to commercial speech, that of corporate speech. However, to date it has been a category seldom used by the courts; in cases where it has been applied, the speech in question has been described by the courts as corporate "political" speech. See **First National Bank of Boston v. Belloti**, 435 U.S. 765 (1978). Therefore, this paper discusses recent FDA regulatory action against pharmaceutical companies' public relations activities in light of the commercial speech doctrine, which seems to be more appropriate.

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"OPTIMAL PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS"

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ABSTRACT

The study determined that a school-business partnership program in Calgary, Alberta provided a structure for system interaction and community support, which are central objectives of both Adaptation and Community models of optimal public relations practice.

PR practitioners were relatively active in the partnerships, and did not merely serve as technicians. There was substantial potential for practitioners to enhance the quality of interaction in the partnerships, and to utilize the partnership opportunity to demonstrate within their organizations the effectiveness and value of optimal public relations practice.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The last 15 years have seen an acceleration of public relations research and theory-building. Models and concepts have emerged that encourage practitioners to become more effective managers as well as expert communicators, so as to realize the full potential of public relations as an organizational function (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Cutlip, Center and Broom 1985; Kruckeberg and Starck, 1988).

This study refers to "optimal public relations" as those models and concepts that contend that the most ethical and socially responsible public relations practice is *also* the most effective public relations practice. It focuses on two strategies that public relations practitioners could utilize in introducing and maintaining optimal public relations practice in their organization: 1) practitioners should target their training and practice to contribute to the effective adaptation of their organization to its environment; and 2) practitioners should strive first and foremost to restore a lost "sense of community" which is the root cause of the alienation of individuals and groups that affect, and are affected by, actions of the organization.

An examination of school-business partnerships is useful as a case study to explore possible strategies for advancing optimal public relations practice in an organization. School-business partnerships -- arrangements which have been gaining in numbers and sophistication in the United States and Canada over the last decade -- are of interest because they involve two systems that were previously relatively closed and alienated from one another "opening up" to each other for mutual benefit and for the benefit of the community. The isolation of the business world from the public school system in the post-World War II era is a factor in the deterioration of community.

After reviewing the experience of school-business partnership programs in Canada and United States, this study will focus on the Calgary (Alberta, Canada) Board of Education's (CBE's) "Partnership in Education" program which has grown from its inception in 1985 to more than 30 school-business partnerships in 1991. The Calgary program strives to achieve two-way, mutually beneficial relationships where the partners interact on a more or less equal footing.

Chapter Two

Optimal Public Relations: Literature Review

A: Systems Theory

Researchers and educators (Bell and Bell, 1976; Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Cutlip et. al., 1985) examined organizations as systems and concluded that an Open System approach is the most effective, particularly for complex organizations whose survival and growth depends on their relations with their environment and their ability to react to changes in their environment. They suggest that the public relations function can be a powerful force in enabling the organization to successfully adjust and change.

First conceptualized by Von Bertalanffy in the 1920s, Systems Theory has been widely used in various disciplines, such as physics, history and sociology. Whatever affects one part of the system affects all parts. (Goldhaber, 1983, p. 66)

The Open Systems Theory which has emerged from the wider concept of systems stresses the importance of interaction between organizations and their environments. Katz and Kahn (1966) define an open system as any living system, whether biological organism or social organization, which is dependent on its external environment for survival (Katz and Kahn, 1966, p. 18).

According to Argyris (1964), the basic concerns of all organizations are the achievement of objectives, the maintenance of the internal system, and adaptation to the external environment. Adaptive subsystems play major roles in fulfilling the survival requirements of a system by enabling it to adapt to a changing world.

B: Role Theory

The study of roles (Role Theory) in organizations/ systems is another area where a significant amount of research has been conducted in recent years to gain insight into the public relations function in organizations. Katz and Kahn (1978) note that each individual in an organization has a particular position which is associated with a set of activities or expected behaviors.

Based on surveys of public relations practitioners, Broom and Smith (1978, 1979) identified four common roles of public relations as it is actually practiced: expert prescriber, communications technician, problem-solving process facilitator and communication facilitator.

In the expert prescriber category, the management of the company considers the public relations practitioner to be the authority on public relations problems and their solutions. The practitioner defines and researches problems, develops programs, and takes major responsibility for implementation.

The problem-solving process facilitator confers effectively with management and others to define and solve public relations problems. A key difference from the expert prescriber role is that there is a high level of management involvement in the implementation of public relations programs.

The communication facilitator concentrates on maintaining effective two-way communication by liaising and mediating with other systems. This role involves interpreting the organization to its publics, and also interpreting the publics to the organization. (Culbertson, 1985, p. 6)

Where the communications technician role is dominant, management values and utilizes the public relations practitioner solely for communication and journalism skills such as journalistic writing, corporate photography and brochure design. This role is not a managerial or decision-making role.

This delineation of roles has been useful in recent years as a basis for studies measuring change in public relations practice. Sufficient correlations have been found between the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator and the problem-solving process facilitator to view them in a "communication manager" role distinct from communication technician. (p. 18) The distinction between the technician role and the manager role is important because research has shown that fulfillment of the managerial role is directly related to an advanced function of public relations which, in turn, is a prerequisite for optimal public relations practice.

C: Optimal Public Relations: Adaptation

Since the mid-1970s, Systems Theory and Role Theory have been utilized in the construction of several variations of public relations models. These models are simplified representations of the practice of public relations that enhance understanding of the purposes and effects of public relations.

Functionary/Functional Distinction. The concept of public relations as an adaptive function in an open social system was advanced by Bell and Bell (1976), who noted that larger, complex organizations in the future will have less and less use for the "one-way, maintenance tasks" of public relations, and a greater need for public relations as a "sensing device" which funnels information about changes in the external environment as well as in the organization.

Bell and Bell conclude that public relations may be viewed as a management tool endowed with the purpose of manipulating internal and external environments; or it may be viewed as not only influencing the environment but also influencing the organization relative to environmental conditions. They describe the first view as the "functionary" mode and the second as the "functional" mode.

Two-Way Symmetrical Model of Public Relations Practice.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) used Systems Theory as a basis for a comprehensive conceptual framework of what public relations does for an organization and how that contribution can be measured and evaluated. They developed four historical models for public relations practice: press agentry/ publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical. They argue for the superiority of the two-way symmetrical model, which effectively utilizes research and feedback mechanisms and stresses the importance of negotiation, mediation and generating understanding as public relations processes that can achieve effective adaptation between the organization and its subsystems (e.g. employees, departments), other systems (government, other institutions) and suprasystems (the community, the nation, the global environment). In the two-way symmetrical model, the public relations process promotes a dialogue between interests and perspectives towards achieving a satisfactory accommodation. The organization constantly seeks feedback from its publics, and negotiates through discussion with the publics *and* changed performance. (p. 23)

Grunig and Grunig (1990) consolidated the data from 13 studies undertaken since the Grunig and Hunt models were introduced in 1984. They concluded that while more organizations practice the least desirable models (press agentry, public information), many organizations do practice the "excellent" model (two-way symmetrical), and most practitioners would like to practice it if they had the knowledge necessary to do so and if conditions in their organizations were favorable for its practice.

Adjustment and Adaptation Model. The Adjustment and Adaptation model of Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) stresses that organizations must continually adjust their relationships with publics in response to ever-changing social milieu.

> Because organization-publics systems exist in changing environments, they must be capable of adapting their goals and relationships to accommodate change pressures from their complex and dynamic settings. (Cutlip et. al., 1985, p. 185)

They note that public relations is part of what organizational theorists call the "adaptive subsystem" -- rather than the production, supportive/disposal, maintenance and managerial subsystems. Public relations practitioners work on behalf of their organizations, and in the public interest, as "managers of change" who plan and facilitate organizational and social adjustment and adaptation. (196)

"Excellent" Public Relations Practice. A six-year project[1] initiated in 1986 and headed by James E. Grunig is examining the communication function as it operates within successful organizations, and attempting to relate "excellent" communication efforts to "excellent" bottom-line performance in an organization.

In an initial report published in 1989, the Grunig team noted that the practice of "excellent" public relations is the most effective means towards achieving the organization's goals -- as well as being the most ethical and socially useful approach.

> Our research suggests that external communication programs and internal communication systems based on symmetrical presuppositions characterize excellent public relations or communication departments. Philosophically, we believe that symmetrical public relations is more ethical and socially responsible than asymmetrical public relations because it manages conflict rather than wages war. But, pragmatically, our literature review shows that symmetrical

> communication programs also are successful more often than asymmetrical ones and contribute more to organizational effectiveness. (p. 11)

Treating publics as equals of the organization and maintaining effective two-way communication with them will gain more support for the organization than short-term efforts to change the publics' behavior, according to the Grunig team's findings.

D: Optimal Public Relations: Community

Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) suggest that existing conceptualizations of public relations do not adequately take into account historical developments that have alienated people from their previous sense of community. The key factors that have transformed communities and caused alienation are changes in transportation and communication.

Kruckeberg and Starck refer to the Chicago School of Social Thought[2], who recognized that Americans were being transformed into a mass society interconnected by a maze of communication networks and transportation systems that yielded both blessings and curses.

Previously, the individual had a sense of membership in society. Family, church and community drew and held the allegiances of the individual because of their apparent relationship with the economic and political order. There was control over the immediate environment and comparative security of economic position:

> Personal and neighborhood affairs were the staple of conversation ...The small, isolated rural towns made public decisions in an atmosphere of local consensus. (Kruckeberg and Starck, p. 44)

Kruckeberg and Starck conclude that many of the public relations problems that today's practitioners concern themselves with would not have occurred or would be resolved more easily and satisfactorily within an environment imbued with a strong sense of community. (pp. 83-84)

Public relations practitioners can take an active part in helping community members become aware of and interested in common ends, according to Kruckeberg and Starck.

> Practitioners can help individuals accommodate themselves to the larger group in the community. They can help members of the community to know one another.. ... They can help bring about a sharing of personal experiences among members of the community. (p. 66)

Cutlip et. al. (1985) also suggest a substantial role for public relations in alleviating the underlying, communication-related problems of society:

> Public relations serves society by mediating conflict and by building relationships essential to the dynamic consensus upon which social order is based. (Cutlip et. al., 1985, p. 19)

Chapter 3

School-Business Partnership Programs: Literature Review

A. Background

The involvement of business in the public school system in formal arrangements expanded dramatically during the last decade in the United States, and during the last five years in Canada. An increasing number of schools and businesses and related groups are finding it important to augment their brief, impersonal encounters of the past (such as career nights, guest speakers, field trips, scholarships) with the establishment of deeper, more meaningful and ongoing relationships. (Sankey, 1987, p. 31)

In 1984, Michael Timpane, Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University, noted that

> Of all the recent changes in the landscape of American education, none has been more dramatic and swift than the reappearance of the business sector. (Timpane, 1984, p. 389)

Timpane noted that from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s business leaders were increasingly distant from public schools as their interest shifted to universities or away from education altogether. Because they lacked contact with public schools, business leaders tended to believe stereotypes of public schooling that circulated during those years -- such as unruly students, militant and uncooperative teachers, and ineffectual administrators. (p. 389)

In this period, negative attitudes of business towards public education were matched by negative attitudes of educators towards business. Wingate (1983) notes that a post-war value system that promoted growth, materialism and cold war diplomacy also led educators to regard business people as reactionary, non-creative, uncaring about humanistic values, and destructive to the environment (Wingate, 1983, pp. 15-17).

Timpane concludes that a key factor that has led business to become actively involved in schools in the 1980s was concern about future availability of qualified employees. It was projected that there would be 20 percent fewer high school graduates in 1990 than in 1980, and the skills needed in the workforce were becoming more complex and demanding. Educators became amenable to business involvement as a result of having virtually nowhere else to turn for help, as governments tightened budgets while presenting increased demands on the public schools.

A 1989 U.S. survey of the National Center for Education Statistics[3] reported that the proportion of American public schools participating in a partnership with an outside organization (usually a business, but sometimes a service group like Rotary or a government body such as the White House) increased from 17 percent of schools in the 1983-84 school year to 40 percent in the 1987-88 school year. (Heaviside et. al., 1989, p. 1)

Businesses were the most frequent sponsors, with 52 percent of all partnerships. Small businesses were the largest component of that total. The fact that almost half were non-business entities is of interest, as it indicates the diversity and flexibility of partnership relationships.

Another interesting finding was that schools with a high proportion of poverty-level students were more likely to have partnerships than those with low numbers of poverty-level students. Also, partnerships were more common in large cities than in smaller communities and rural areas.

B. Assessment of Partnerships in U.S. by Business

Survey of Forbes 500 CEO's. Most of the literature related to school-business partnerships is associated with the educational value for students of the additional human and material resources provided by the partner. The impact on the participating business is seen as much less important than the impact on the students. However, a survey in 1986 of the actions and opinions of major corporations provided some data relevant to this study[4].

TABLE 3-1

Incidence of Partnership Activities
(CEOs' responses)

Joint ventures	73%
Adopt-a-School program	45%
Providing guest speakers	67%
Giving in-house tours for students	65%
Donating equipment for the school	57%
Help with school career days	51%
Sponsored achievement awards for students	31%
Tutors provided	26%
Arrange/sponsor leadership conferences	26%
Put on assembly programs	22%
Provided mentors for students	18%
Internships for students	18%
Job training for students	16%

Shakeshaft-Trachtman, 1986

The finding (see Table 3-1) that many more companies are involved in a "joint venture" program as opposed to an "adopt-a-school" program indicates that the concept of a two-way, mutually beneficial partnership was quite common in the United States when the study was conducted.

Of particular interest to this study of optimal public relations practice in relation to school-business partnerships was this conclusion from the survey data:

> In most cases, a vice president for community affairs or the person designated as the public relations officer contacts and works with a teacher, principal or superintendent. (p. 3)

Most respondents (58 percent) said their efforts in the partnership were aimed at improving student academic achievement, while half stressed career education as their goal. The next most often cited reason for participation in partnerships was to "secure a more favorable image of the corporation within the community". Two other rationales offered by a quarter of the respondents were to provide business role models for students and to help schools resolve financial and administrative problems. Just 9 percent said "improving the financial management of the school system", 8 percent said they were using the partnership to teach students the benefits of the free enterprise system, and 6 percent said their goal was to provide a better trained workforce.

Of those respondents not involved in a partnership, nearly half maintained that their employees did not have time to volunteer and the corporation was not able or willing to compensate them for their time.

The survey showed that involvement in a partnership tended to improve the image of education among the business people participating in the program. Seventy-five percent said they were more positively inclined toward American education and interested in further participation in the improvement of public schools. Eighty-one percent of respondents said they were pleased with their involvement with the schools, while less than 1 per cent said they wanted to end their involvement as soon as possible.

1990 Fortune Magazine Survey. Another indication of the prominence of the public education issue in the U.S. business world was the publication of a special "Saving Our Schools" issue of *Fortune* magazine in the spring of 1990. As part of the issue, results of a survey of major U.S. corporations were announced[5].

The survey (see Table 3-2) indicated that almost half of the major corporations assisted public education by participating in a partnership with a school. This indicates that the partnership movement has continued through the 1980s to the point where a major U.S. company in 1990 was as likely as not to be involved in a partnership.

TABLE 3-2
What is your company doing to help public education?
(CEOs' responses)

Contributing money	78%
Contributing materials and equipment	64%
Encouraging employees to tutor or teach	50%
Participating in a partnerships	**48%**
Offering teachers summer jobs	26%
Supporting tax increases or bond issues	18%
Loaning executives to schools	12%

Fortune - 1990

C: The Canadian Experience with Partnerships

Although Canada is generally considered to be about five years behind the United States in partnerships (Bloom, 1990b), by 1990 programs of active school-business linkage were in place in every Canadian province and territory.

The high level of interest by Canadian businesses in involvement in public education is reflected in the publication by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in 1989 and

1990 of resource guides on business involvement in schools.

Noting that "(school-business) partnerships are thriving in Canada", the 1990 guide acknowledges the role of partnerships in promoting a sense of community:

> Experience has already shown that by having businesses and schools working together, a richer sense of community can be developed. The result is a healthier economic climate where employers, employees, teachers and students can all benefit. (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 1990, p. i)

Mutual Assistance Concept. Business involvement in schools has always been thought of as mutually beneficial, due to the long-term benefits to business of a better-educated workforce. However, in recent years the organizers of a number of partnership programs have worked to attain and recognize short-term mutual benefits as well as long-term benefits to each partner from healthy exposure to, and interaction with, the other.

A good example of immediate benefits to partners that are not necessarily educational was the partnership between a high school in Owen Sound, Ontario, and Monroe Canada, a large local producer of automotive shock absorbers. The partnership was designed to be a mutually-assisting relationship, using the strengths of each partner to meet the needs of the other.

At the time the partnership arrangement was confirmed in 1983, the Monroe plant was changing its assembly line from an endless-belt operation to a series of self-contained work stations. They experienced problems when drawings of the new floor layout were still incomplete several months after production resumed. A group of the school's senior drafting students took on the task of measuring and locating each machine and service outlet on the 300,000 square foot plant floor.

The result: Monroe got a badly needed set of exact

> plans, the school was given all its drafting supplies for a year, and the students experienced real-life, productive work in a factory. Monroe's management was enthusiastic; the school community was ecstatic. (Cameron, 1987, p. 42)

D. Antagonism From Educators is Rare

Commentary on business-school partnerships has generally been highly favorable for such business involvement, even in teachers' publications that could understandably be suspicious of the motives of business or the results of business intrusion in what has traditionally been exclusively the turf of a public education system relatively free from outside interference or control. However, there have been a number of articles warning teachers to be vigilant against business using the relationship to sell a particular product or ideology.

However, a 1987 study[6] by Mann concluded that:

> businesses have not shown much evidence of: 1) an intention to control the schools or to interfere with their operation; 2) a desire to displace job-specific training costs from the private to the public sector; or 3) a broad reform agenda. Instead, business seems to want to help in practical ways that meet a need expressed by the local public schools. (Mann, 1987a, p. 126)

The Mann study found that the greatest interest in school-business partnerships was in large cities, with interest dropping off dramatically in small towns and even more in rural areas. He quoted one small town superintendent as commenting:

> "The 'power structure'? I have coffee with it every morning at the doughnut shop". (Mann, 1987b, p. 229).

That finding is of particular interest to this study's analysis of school-business partnerships in relation to the Community concept of optimal public relations. It is noteworthy that partnerships are not seen as being necessary in the smaller towns and rural areas which have retained their sense of community much more than urban areas.

Chapter 4
Methodology

To examine possible relationships between optimal public relations and a partnership program's experience and potential, this study examined the Partnership in Education program coordinated through the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). A multi-method approach was used, including self-administered mailed questionnaires, in-depth interviews and review of appropriate documents. The multi-method approach is particularly important for this study because of the lack of data relating optimal public relations with organizational involvement in public education.

A: The Survey Instrument

During the 1990-91 school year, the Calgary partnership program encompassed 34 partnerships (see Appendix A). For the purposes of this study, the sample frame only included the "current partners". Surveys were sent to 20 organization contacts and 19 school contacts (the difference is a result of a school partnered with more than one organization). Another questionnaire went to the coordinators of other district-wide or city-wide school-business partnership programs in other parts of Canada (see Appendix K).

The list of these three sets of contact persons was that used in December, 1990 by the CBE community relations officer in charge of the partnership program. This sample frame was used because the contact individuals were, by the nature of their role, likely to be knowledgeable of the progress of their partnership.

All of the questionnaires were mailed on January 10, 1991. Non-respondents were sent a second mailing of the survey on January 28, 1991, along with a letter from the CBE partnership coordinator (Appendix M) encouraging their participation.

In early February, 1991, in-depth interviews were conducted of coordinators of organizations that, based on questionnaire responses, had a public relations function appropriate for deeper analysis.

To avoid a bias of responses, the public relations aspect of the survey was not mentioned to respondents beforehand.

Mail Survey to Businesses and Other Partner Organizations. The survey form (Appendix G) sought information on the level of involvement in the partnership by public relations or community relations departments or individuals. As reference in determining the level of public relations involvement in the partnership, respondents were asked to also assess the level of involvement of other departments such as Human Resources, Engineering and Accounting.

Another goal of the survey was to determine the types of activities which were most common in the partnerships, and whether or not the partnership was working as basically a one-way or two-way arrangement. Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of several reasons for involvement in a partnership, and to state the most important benefits of the partnership to their company.

Mail Survey of Schools. To provide further information -- and as a check on the validity of the business contacts' responses to the survey -- a survey in a similar format (Appendix H) was mailed to the school coordinators.

Mail Survey of Other Partnership Programs in Canada. Is public relations involvement in the Calgary partnership program significantly different from other partnership programs in Canada? To gain insight into how the Calgary program compares to other programs, a similar, customized survey (Appendix I) was mailed to nine coordinators of other partnership programs in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

In-depth Personal Interviews. It was recognized that a number of the Calgary organizations involved in current partnerships were not of sufficient size and complexity that their infrastructure would include a public relations department, or even a single practitioner[7]. Therefore, purposive sampling was used -- based on the survey responses and other knowledge of the companies -- to select organizations for in-depth, personal interviews. The five selected for interviews were the contact persons of organizations that had a public relations department they rated as "very involved" in the partnership. One other respondent stated her association's public relations department was very involved in the partnership, but it was a late-arriving response that could not be accommodated within the interview schedule.

The interviews included specific questions and open-ended questions. Based on role definitions noted in Chapter 2, the interviews attempted to delineate the proportion of public relations roles that were expert prescriber, communications technician, problem-solving process facilitator or communications facilitator. It also investigated whether the partnership was part of Corporate Strategic Plan of adaptation or community enhancement or a public relations department's Communications Plan.

Document Review and Other Research Measures. In addition to the mail survey and personal interview schedule, evaluative activities for the case study included a review of documents, including issues of the CBE's partnership newsletter, speeches, presentations, a 1987 consultants' evaluation report, and a promotional video.

B: Operationalization and Measurement

In Relation to Optimal Public Relations. To operationalize survey data in relation to public relations involvement in partnerships, a range of measurements were taken, including: 1) the public relations practitioner/department playing a leading role in the initiation of the partnership; 2) the public relations department represented on the organization's task force/steering committee for the partnership; 3) the actual involvement of the public relations department in the partnership; 4) the public relations department evaluating the partnership to determine the effectiveness of the program; 5) inclusion of the partnership program in a communication plan or business plan as part of a far-sighted program to enable the organization to adapt to a changing environment; and 6) inclusion of the partnership program as part of a planned effort to enhance the community.

Partnerships as an Opportunity for Optimal Public Relations Practice. To determine the extent to which partnerships are an opportunity for optimal public relations practice, measures were also taken of 1) the incidence of various types of partnership activities; 2) evaluations of partnerships as being primarily one-way or primarily two-way relationships; 3) evaluations of relative importance of reasons for partnership involvement; and 4) evaluation of the most important benefits resulting from the partnerships.

To quantify results for purposes of analysis and comparison, values were placed on responses and Likert-type scales were used.

Chapter 5

Results

A: Background to Calgary Program

With 204 schools and 94,000 students, the CBE is the second largest school system in Canada. Calgary was the second city in Canada, after Vancouver, to adopt a large-scale partnership program. The mandate of the Partnership program initiated in 1985 was to foster direct, ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships between Calgary businesses or organizations and CBE schools, and enrich the learning experiences of students through the provision of time and expertise.

The program operates through the Communications Department, part of the Office of the Superintendent. A significant amount of ongoing support provided to partnerships by the CBE is important to consider in this study because it fulfills part of the "communication manager" role noted in Chapter 2 as a requirement for optimal public relations practice. The individual partnerships gain from the research, planning and evaluation efforts of the CBE.

B: Document Review

Part of the analysis of this case study involved a review of documents associated with the CBE partnership program, including a consultant's evaluation study of the program in 1987, issues of the program's newsletter, CBE promotional materials (including the script of a video designed to attract new businesses as partners), speeches and presentations at the annual partnership seminars, and educational journal articles. These documents were either publicly available or provided to the author by the CBE for the purposes of this study.

Evaluation Study of Program. In 1987 the CBE commissioned a consulting firm to conduct an evaluation study of the Partnerships in Education program. The study examined the program's design, implementation, procedures and outcomes. The subsequent report concluded that, of the initial partnerships:

> three can be considered active and successful, one remains in the planning mode, and one has been terminated. ...The positive human gains experienced by all participants as well as perceived benefits to schools and businesses support program continuation and development. (Barrington, 1987, p. iii).

In addition, the report recognized significant benefits accruing to the partner businesses such as improved staff morale, better communication among employees, and increased communication with and understanding of schools.

> Volunteers gained a greater understanding and enjoyment of today's students while their businesses experienced such positive gains as an increased focus on volunteer work, additional manpower support and a sense of increased community involvement. (p. 33)

None of the study's participants saw any drawbacks to students or schools resulting from involvement in the program. However, the commitment of teachers and the ambiguity of the teacher role in partnerships were noted as challenges for those leading the partnership program. Teachers appeared to be confused as to whether they were conscripts or volunteers in the partnership activities.

Business volunteers gained more recognition than teachers for their involvement in partnerships. The main concern expressed by the business volunteers was of time lost from their workplace as a result of their partnership activities.

Review of Other Documents and Comments Concerning the Calgary Program. A review of various documents associated with the Calgary program indicates recognition among some businesses that their partnership experience is both good for the community and good for the business because it enables the business to adapt better to a changing world.

Glenn Rainbird, Vice President, Public Relations, Northern Telecom Canada Limited, noted that

> ...fundamentally, the partnership program recognizes that business and education ...have a symbiotic relationship. Our ability to succeed in our separate spheres depends in large measure on our ability to provide each other with crucial resources. (Rainbird, 1990, p. 6)

Rainbird noted that the school-business partnership concept exemplifies a "new mindset" whereby business and education recognize they have to change in the Information Age, and that working together in a partnership is a means for effectively managing the change.

Jim Gray, Executive Vice President of Canadian Hunter Exploration, noted:

> The more familiar we get with each other, and with what each other is trying to do, then the more we find we have in common ...Often times, young people have this image that business isn't fun or that it's not operating in the public interest ...Partnerships are breaking down the negative images industry and education have of each other.

Gray noted that partnerships provide vital communication links which allow business and education to appreciate each other's problems, and work together towards common solutions.

C: Survey Results

Response Rate. The two waves of mailings attracted a near-perfect response rate: 20 (100 per cent) came from business contacts, 19 (100 per cent) from school contacts and 8 (88 per cent) from other partnership program contacts.

Characteristics of Respondents. Of the business respondents, four were in the oil and gas industry, two were hotels, two were education institutions, and the other 12 included a variety of businesses and other organizations.

Of the school respondents, six were from senior high schools and the rest from various combinations of elementary, junior high and senior high students.

The respondents of other Canadian partnership programs had between 11 and 60 partnerships. One was a partnership program in Edmonton, another in Vancouver, and the other six were various partnership programs in southern Ontario.

Incidence of Departments in Partner Organizations. Of the 20 business partner respondents, 16 indicated they had a President/Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.), 15 a Marketing/Sales department, 13 Business Systems/Data Processing, 13 Engineering/Operations, 12 Finance/Accounting, 12 Human Resources/Personnel, 9 Donations/Contributions, and 9 Public Relations/Community Relations.

TABLE 5-1
Level of Involvement of Departments of Business Partners
(Responses of Business Partner Contacts)

	N	$\bar{X}$	Not Involved	Somewhat Invol.	Very Invol.
P.R./Community Relations	9	1.6	1	2	6
Donations/Contributions	9	1.2	0	7	2
Marketing/Sales	15	1.2	4.5	1.5	9
Engineering/Operations	13	1.2	2	7	4
Business/Data Systems	13	1.0	3	7	3
Finance/Accounting	12	.7	5	5	2
H.R./Personnel	12	.7	5	7	1
President/C.E.O.	16	.6	9	5	2

Calculations of responses for the mean ($\bar{X}$) are based on a value of 0 for no involvement, 1 for "somewhat involved" and 2 for "very involved". If the department did not exist in the organization, it was not included as part of the calculation.

Business/Organization Involvement. As indicated in Table 5-1, the public relations/community relations department was rated by business respondents as having the highest level of involvement, followed by "Donation/Contributions (which, as noted earlier, is usually part of, or associated with, the public relations department). Of the nine with Public Relations/Community Relations, six were "very involved", two "somewhat involved" and one "not involved". It is noteworthy that "Human Resources/Personnel", which might be expected to be actively involved in partnerships if the primary goal of the organization was to make contact with future employees, was near the bottom of the ratings.

TABLE 5-2
Level of Involvement of Departments of Business Partners
(Responses of Coordinators of Other Canadian
Partnership Programs)

	N	$\bar{X}$	Not Involved	Somewhat Invol.	Very Invol.
H.R./Personnel	4	2.0	0	0	4
P.R./Community Relations	4	1.2	0	3	4
Marketing/Sales	4	1.2	0	3	1
Engineering/Operations	4	1.0	0	3	1
Donations/Contributions	3	.7	1	2	0
Business/Data Systems	4	.7	1	2	1
Finance/Accounting	4	.7	1	2	1
President/C.E.O.	5	.6	0	3	2

Calculations of responses for the mean ($\bar{X}$) as in Table 5-1.

However, the responses of the other Canadian partnership contacts (Table 5-2) rated Human Resources/ Personnel with the highest level of involvement in partnerships. Public Relations/Community Relations is at the next level along with Marketing/Sales and President/C.E.O.

Another measure of involvement of public relations departments was whether or not a public relations person was included in the organization's Partnership Task Force or

Steering Committee. Table 5-3 indicates that public relations people are more likely than any other department to be involved in such a group, which indicates a role in planning and coordination of the partnerships. However, Donations/Contributions had a below-average level of involvement in such groups.

TABLE 5-3
Level of Involvement of Departments of Business Partners in Partnership Task Forces/Steering Committees
(Responses of Business Partner Contacts and of Coordinators of Other Canadian Partnership Programs)

	Business Contacts		Other Canadian Partnership Coordinators	
	N	Percent On Task Force	N	Percent On Task Force
P.R/Community Relations	4	75%	5	100%
Marketing/Sales	6	50%	3	100%
Personnel/H.R.	4	50%	5	100%
Engineering/Operations	6	50%	3	33%
Donations/Contributions	6	50%	3	33%
Finance/Accounting	6	33%	3	33%
President/CEO	6	33%	4	25%
Business/Data Systems	4	0%	3	33%

Calculations based on a value of 0 for not on the committee and 1 for being on the committee. Department not counted if organization either doesn't have such a committee or if the organization doesn't have that department.

The relatively high level of involvement of public relations departments in partnership planning and coordinating groups was confirmed in the responses of coordinators of other Canadian partnership programs. Public Relations/Community Relations was in the leading group along with Marketing/Sales and Human Resources/Personnel.

In evaluating the business contacts' ratings of the relative importance of several reasons for participation in a partnership, it is significant (see Table 5-4) that the

TABLE 5-4
Reasons for Having a Partnership

(mean scores on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 "not at all important" and 4 "very important")

	Sch.	Bus.	Other	$\bar{X}$
The Partnership is a means for the organization to be a "good corporate citizen" in the community.	3.6	3.8	3.3	3.6
Teachers and students understand their partner organization and its business better as a result of the partnership.	3.3	2.8	3.7	3.3
People in the organization understand the school and the education system better as a result of the Partnership.	3.4	3.0	3.6	3.3
The Partnership involvement improves employee morale.	3.2	2.9	2.7	3.0
The Partnership experience helps the organization adapt better to a changing society.	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.6
The Partnership enables the organization to make contact with future employees and customers.	2.3	2.2	2.6	2.4

(Responses are an aggregate from School Partner Contacts, Business Partner Contacts, and Other Canadian Partnership Program Coordinators)

"good corporate citizenship in the community" reason had the highest rating by a substantial margin. Business also rated improved employee morale, and the gaining of understanding of each other as of higher importance than enabling the organization to adapt better to a changing society and enabling the organization to make contact with future employees and customers.

Nature of Partnerships. Survey results of both business contacts and school contacts (see Table 5-5) indicated that the most common business activities in partnerships are: 1) employees participating in school extra-curricular activities; 2) providing guest speakers to school classes; and 3) providing tours of facilities. Mentor programs and career shadowing programs -- which would indicate a deeper association between the school and the business and more interaction between the systems -- are not as common.

TABLE 5-5
Incidence of Business Activities in Partnerships
(Business and School Responses)

	Sch.	Bus.
Employees participating in school extra-curricular activities	95%	85%
Providing guest speakers to school classes	89%	80%
Tours of organization's facilities	84%	85%
Providing teaching materials to the schools	58%	40%
Career shadowing	58%	55%
Mentor programs	32%	35%
Employees serving as tutors	26%	35%

As indicated in Table 5-6, the type of activities most common in Calgary partnerships are not substantially different from those of other Canadian programs.

Two-Way Aspect of Partnerships. About half of the school respondents and organization respondents felt that the

TABLE 5-6
Incidence of Business Activities in Partnerships
(Responses of Coordinators of Other Partnership Programs)

	$\bar{X}$
Providing guest speakers to school classes	3.7
Tours of organization's facilities	3.2
Career shadowing	2.8
Providing teaching materials to school	2.7
Employees in school extra-curricular activities	1.8
Mentor program	2.0
Employees serving as tutors	1.7

Means are based on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 was "least common" and 4 was "most common" partnership benefitted the school and organization equally, and half of each felt the partnership benefitted the school primarily (see Table 5-7). No respondent in either group stated that the partnership benefitted the organization primarily.

TABLE 5-7
Who Does the Partnership Benefit Primarily?
(School and Business Responses)

	School Respondents		Business Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
The School	9	47%	10	50%
The Business	0	0%	0	0%
Both Equally	10	53%	10	50%
N	19		20	

Initiators of Partnerships. Of the business respondents, 8 said the CBE first proposed that their company become involved in a partnership, 4 said someone in the school proposed the partnership, and 8 said someone in their company proposed such a partnership.

Of the other Canadian partnerships' respondents, three listed "public relations" or "public affairs" as being among the most common departments to propose a partnership. Human resources departments were also listed three times, and no other area more than once.

Responsibility for Initial Organization of Partnership. Of the business contacts who were asked to state the title of the individual most directly responsible for the initial organization of the partnership program with the school, 6 were apparently related to a public relations function (Public Affairs Representative, Community Liaison Officer, Director of Corporate Affairs, Director of Public Affairs, Corporate Communication Manager, Public Relations Manager, and Vice President, Development and Planning), while the other 13 had a variety of position titles.

Partnership Benefits Perceived as Most Important. Requested to state the two most important benefits to the company, the business contacts and other Canadian partnership program coordinators (see Appendix L) provided a variety of replies. Among the business responses, the word "community" was used 12 times in the statements of benefits, and "understanding" was used 4 times. Responses from other partnership program contacts as to how the partnership benefits organizations were quite diverse, with only one reference to increasing understanding and making contact with students. Of the school responses as to how the partnership benefits the school, the terms "understanding", "awareness", "interaction" and "bridging" were each used more than once.

Evaluation and Steering Committee Usage. Of the 20 business respondents, 7 had a means for evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership and 13 did not. Nine had a Partnership Steering Committee or Task Force, while 11 did not.

D: Personal Interviews

Characteristics of Interview Sample. As noted in Chapter 4, the five business contact persons interviewed were among six respondents who stated that their organization's Public Relations/Community Relations department was "very involved" in the partnership.

Four of the five interviewees were themselves part of a department that was either named "public relations" or the equivalent. In those cases, the employee directly responsible for the initial organization of the partnership had a public relations title. The fifth interview respondent was retail marketing manager in a Marketing/Communications department. Each of the five performed coordinating and liaison roles for their organization's involvement in the partnership.

Of the businesses of the interviewees, survey responses indicate that two of the partnerships were initiated by the business, two by the CBE and two by the school. Of the two partnerships initiated by the business, both were by an individual with a "Vice President" title.

Regarding partnership activities, all five provided tours of their facilities and had employees participating in extracurricular school activities. Four provided guest speakers to the school, three had a career shadowing program with the school, one provided teaching materials to the school, and none had employees serving as tutors in the school.

Four said the partnership benefitted the school primarily, and one said it benefitted the school and the business equally. Two utilized an annual partnership evaluation process, and three did not.

Personal Interview Findings. The purpose of the interview was to gain further information that could not practically be obtained through a filled-out questionnaire.

Three of the five public relations departments were primarily performing communication technician functions (such as producing posters and notice boards, writing articles on the partnership for the corporate newsletter), and two were primarily "communication facilitator" (liaison work and organization of events).

Two of the respondents said their organization's partnership was part of a Corporate Strategy or Business Plan, although in neither case was it evident that the primary function was "expert prescriber" or "problem-solving process facilitator". In one case, the respondent's contribution to the partnership was assessed as part of the Performance Management Plan she was responsible for, and the Public Affairs department as a whole was also evaluated on the results of their involvement in the partnership. The other respondent's work towards the partnership was regularly evaluated in relation to her performance objectives.

Chapter 6
Discussion and Conclusions

A: Summary of the Study's Major Findings

Mainly Regarding the Public Relations Function

a. Businesses that have public relations departments tend to utilize that department to a significant extent in getting their partnership off the ground and coordinating it on an ongoing basis.

b. The communication facilitator and communication technician are the dominant roles of public relations departments in partnerships.

c. Businesses were mainly involved in partnerships for altruistic reasons.

d. Businesses and schools both recognize the value of partnerships in enhancing mutual understanding.

e. The partnerships currently involve many more relatively "routine" activities (such as guest speakers and tours of facilities) than "innovative" activities involving greater interaction between business people and students and teachers (such as mentor programs and career shadowing programs).

Mainly Regarding the Calgary Partnership Program

a. The fact that half of the respondents -- both from the schools and the businesses -- thought the partnership was primarily benefitting the school, half thought it was mutually beneficial, and none felt it was benefitting the business primarily indicated that the program had not fully achieved its goal of having the partnerships be of equal benefit to both partners.

b. Most businesses, including those where the public relations department was very involved in the partnership, did not have an ongoing process for evaluating the partnership. However, the CBE performed this function for the partnerships to a certain extent, and encouraged the partners to set goals and objectives and evaluate their progress each year.

B: Discussion of Major Findings

Communications Manager Role Evident. Public relations was generally the most active organizational department in partnerships where the partner businesses had a public relations department. While much of the public relations activity was, by necessity, in the communication technician role, there was also enough of the communication facilitator role in planning and liaison work to establish the basis for a communication manager role.

Potential of Strategic Corporate Approach to Partnerships The nature of the partnership program's structure and experience -- mutuality, two-way relationships, corporate altruism, concern for the community -- lends itself to optimal public relations practice. At present, however, public relations people involved in the partnerships are generally not utilizing the full potential of the partnerships to demonstrate an ideal public relations approach within their companies.

While there are some notable exceptions, partnership activities are still mainly routine and do not involve close interaction between individual employees and students and teachers. Time constraints are obviously a key factor in this shortcoming. Devising creative ways to gain greater interaction in the partnership is a continuing challenge for the CBE and for both sides of the partnerships.

It appears that senior management finds the partnership concept something they want their company involved in, but -- perhaps because of the relatively small amount of money involved -- the partnership is not regarded as something requiring the company's highest standard of managerial expertise.

Adaptation and Community Models of Optimal Public Relations. Active participation in a partnership with a school would appear to be one way for a business to position itself to continually adjust its relationships with publics in a changing environment in a process proposed in the Adaptation models.

While the Adaptation models relate well to the school-business partnerships, the Community model appears to be even more in tune with businesses' participation in such arrangements. The higher level of interest among partner businesses in serving the community relates clearly to Kruckeberg and Starck's concept that the primary purpose of public relations should be to restore a sense of community.

C: Conclusion

This study indicates that a school-business partnership program such as Calgary's is an opportunity to advance the standard of practice in their organization from traditional to optimal. The program is amenable to an advanced public relations approach because its objectives are similar to those of the optimal public relations models. Even if senior management decides to participate in a partnership for the "wrong" reasons, the public relations practitioner could demonstrate the effectiveness of optimal public relations approaches in developing a successful partnership.

D. Recommendations for Further Research

Similar studies of other public relations-related programs -- areas such as corporate donations, public input programs and news conferences -- would be useful to provide further insights into opportunities for optimal public relations practice.

Footnotes

1 - The ongoing, $620,000 study initiated in 1986 has James E. Grunig of the University of Maryland as Project Director. Other team members are David M. Dozier of San Diego State University, William P. Ehling of Syracuse University, Larissa A. Grunig of University of Maryland, Jon White of the Cranfield School of Journalism and public relations consultant Fred C. Repper. The first chapter of the report was made available to IABC members in galley proof form in 1989.

2 - The Chicago School were sociologists in the era of approximately 1892 to 1939 who identified and pursued the question of loss of community. Central figures in this School included John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, W.I. Thomas, Charles Horton Cooley, Robert E. Park, Thorstein Veblen, Ernest Watson Burgess and Louis Wirth.

3 - As part of the larger survey, questionnaires were mailed to a national probability sample of 1,574 regular public elementary and secondary public schools. Aided by telephone follow-up on non-respondents, a response rate of 96 percent was attained.

4 - Shakeshaft and Trachtman drew a sample of 500 for a mail survey of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from the 809 corporations on the *Forbes 500* list. There were 345 respondents.

5 - The *Fortune* survey drew a sample of 500 from among the Fortune 500 and Service 500 companies. A total of 305 company representatives responded to the survey.

6 - Mann analyzed business involvement in 23 major U.S. cities' schools from 1983 to 1987, as well as another 85 public school districts to provide a random sample.

7 - This would include, among others, the Rotary Club, two relatively small hotels, and a committee of the Chamber of Commerce.

8 - Other departments that were listed as "very involved" in a partnership with a school included Exploration, Front Desk, Retail Operations, Facilities, Resource Protection, Chemicals, Student Association, Business Administration/ Service, Professional Staff, and Rooms.

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CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION
"PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION"

APPENDIX A

CURRENT PARTNERS

1. Calgary West Rotary/Shaughnessy High School
2. The Glenmore Inn/Ogden Elementary School
3. The Co-operators/David Thompson Junior High School
4. NOVA Corporation/Crescent Heights High School
5. SAIT/Rosedale Elementary & Junior High School
6. Canadian Occidental Petroleum/Bob Edwards Junior High School
7. Digital Equipment of Canada/William Aberhart High School
8. The Marlborough Inn/Ian Bazalgette Junior High School
9. Deloitte & Touche/Queen Elizabeth High School
10. Canadian Hunter Exploration/Sherwood Community School
11. Shell Canada/Sir Winston Churchill High School
12. IBM Canada/John G. Diefenbaker High School
13. Fortress Mountain & Wintergreen Resorts/Shaughnessy High School
14. Native Canadian Opportunities Committee (Calgary Chamber of Commerce)/ Forest Lawn High School
15. Royal LePage/Rosscarrock Elementary School
16. Calgary Real Estate Board/Sunalta Elementary School
17. DeVry Institute of Technology/Belfast Elementary School
18. Oxford Development Group/Crescent Heights High School
19. Canadian Western Natural Gas/Lord Beaverbrook High School
20. Canada Safeway Store #292/Fred Parker Elementary School

"SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP WITH CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION"

21. Alberta Theatre Projects
22. Theatre Calgary
23. Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts
24. Calgary Philharmonic
25. Calgary City Ballet
26. Calgary Opera
27. One Yellow Rabbit

LAW PARTNERS

28. Walsh Wilkins/James Fowler High School
29. Atkinson McMahon/Queen Elizabeth School
30. Cook Duke Cox Tod & Kenny/Bishop Grandin High School

MATCHES

31. James Fowler High School/Northern Telecom
32. Patrick Airlie Elementary School/Forest Lawn Co-op Centre
33. Alternative High School/Alberta College of Art
34. John Ware Junior High School/Calgary Co-op (Oakridge)

Partnership Update
November 16, 1990

January 2, 1991

Jim Barnes,
Principal
Shaughnessy High School
2336 53rd Ave. S.W.
Calgary, AB
T3E 1L2

TO: School Coordinators of Partnerships with Organizations

RE: Survey of Partnerships

As part of my Masters thesis at the University of Calgary, I am analyzing the involvement of organizations partnered with schools through the Calgary Board of Education's "Partnership in Education" program.

I am also personally interested in this area because I am on the Steering Committee for a partnership between my employer, Canadian Western Natural Gas, and Lord Beaverbrook High School.

In preparing for this study, I have received encouragement and assistance from Dianne Clark at the School Board office.

You will soon be receiving a survey questionnaire that I will ask you to fill out and return to me. The project is examining which structures and approaches work best for organizations and schools in ensuring the effectiveness of the partnership they are participating in.

Yours truly,

Sam E. McBride
Partnership Steering Committee
Canadian Western Natural Gas

APPENDIX C

January 2, 1991

TO: Coordinators of Partnerships with Calgary Schools

RE: Survey of Organizational Involvement in Partnerships

As part of my Masters thesis at the University of Calgary, I am analyzing the involvement of organizations partnered with schools through the Calgary Board of Education's "Partnership in Education" program.

I am also personally interested in this area because I am on the Steering Committee for a partnership between my employer, Canadian Western Natural Gas, and Lord Beaverbrook High School.

In preparing for this study, I have received encouragement and assistance from Dianne Clark at the School Board office.

You will soon be receiving a survey questionnaire that I will ask you to fill out and return to me. The project is examining which structures and approaches work best for organizations in ensuring the effectiveness of the partnership they are participating in.

Yours truly,

Sam E. McBride
Member, Partnership Steering Committee
Canadian Western Natural Gas

January 10, 1991

TO: School Coordinators of Partnership Programs

RE: Survey of Partnerships

As I mentioned in a previous letter to you, I am conducting a survey of organizations and schools partnered in the Calgary Board of Education's "Partnership in Education" program.

I am doing this as part of a University of Calgary Masters thesis project. I am also personally interested in this area because I am on the Steering Committee for a new partnership between my employer, Canadian Western Natural Gas, and Lord Beaverbrook High School. Also, I will be leading a workshop at the CBE's annual Partnerships seminar next May on promotion of partnerships within an organization.

One of the goals of the study is to propose strategies that could be of value in furthering the effectiveness of Partnership programs.

Attached is a survey questionnaire that I would like you to fill out and return to me in the stamped envelope provided.

Please note that results will only be reported as a composite. Individual responses will be kept confidential.

A summary of the results of my survey will be available to all participants upon request. If you have any questions, please call me at 245-7612 (work) or 281-5081 (residence).

Yours truly,

Sam E. McBride

APPENDIX B

January 10, 1991

TO: Coordinators of Partnerships with Calgary Schools

RE: Survey of Partnerships

As I mentioned in a previous letter to you, I am conducting a survey of organizations and schools partnered in the Calgary Board of Education's "Partnership in Education" program.

I am doing this as part of a University of Calgary masters thesis project. I am also personally interested in this area because I am on the Steering Committee for a new partnership between my employer, Canadian Western Natural Gas, and Lord Beaverbrook High School. Also, I will be leading a workshop at the CBE's annual Partnerships seminar next May on promotion of partnerships within an organization.

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Please note that results will only be reported as a composite. Individual responses will be kept confidential.

A summary of the results of my survey will be available to all participants upon request. If you have any questions, please call me at 245-7612 (work) or 281-5081 (residence).

Yours truly,

Sam E. McBride

APPENDIX F

January 10, 1991

Mary Gayle Dillon
Director, KASE
P.O. Box 1783
Kingston, ON
K7L 5J6

TO: Coordinators of Partnership Programs in Canada

RE: Survey of Partnerships

As part of a Graduate Program in Communication Studies research project at the University of Calgary, I am conducting a survey of school-business partnership programs. The main focus of my study is the Calgary Board of Education's "Partnerships in Education" program, but I am also interested in how that particular program relates to others in Canada. I have received support and encouragement from the Calgary Board Office for this study.

Attached is a survey questionnaire that I would like you to fill out and return to me in the stamped envelope provided.

A summary of the results of my survey will be available to all participants upon request.

I will respect any concerns you might have about confidentiality or sensitivity associated with your partnership or your organization. If you have any questions, please call me at 245-7612 (work) or 281-5081 (residence).

Yours truly,

Sam E. McBride

APPENDIX G

CALGARY PARTNERSHIP SURVEY

Please check the appropriate line

1. *What is the nature of your organization's business?*

_____ Oil and Gas

_____ Financial

_____ Non-profit institution or association

_____ Service Club

_____ Other (please specify) ______________________________

---

2. *How many employees in your organization?*

_____ Under 100

_____ Between 100 and 1,000

_____ More than 1,000

---

3. *How long has your organization been partnered with the school?*

_________ years

---

4. *Who first proposed that your organization become a partner in the Partnership program?*

_____ The Chamber of Commerce

_____ The Calgary Board of Education

_____ Someone in the school

_____ Someone in the organization *

* if it was someone in the organization, please note the job title of that individual

____

5. Who in the organization was directly responsible for the initial organization of the partnership program with the school (state job title)

____

6. In your partnership program to date, what is the level of involvement of the following individuals or departments (or their equivalents) in your organization's partnership activities. If the organization does not have the department, mark the "not applicable" (N.A.) section.

	NOT INVOLVED	SOMEWHAT INVOLVED	VERY INVOLVED	N.A.
President/ C.E.O.	____	____	____	____
Personnel/Human Resources Dept.	____	____	____	____
Public Relations/ Community Relations	____	____	____	____
Marketing/ Sales Dept.	____	____	____	____
Engineering/ Operations	____	____	____	____
Donations/ Contributions	____	____	____	____
Business Systems/ Data Processing	____	____	____	____
Finance/ Accounting	____	____	____	____
Other substantial departments (specify)				
____________	____	____	____	
____________	____	____	____	
____________	____	____	____	

7. Does your organization have a Partnership Steering Committee or a Partnership Task Force, or a similar body?

Yes _____ **No** _____

If "yes", answer question 8; if "no", proceed to question 9.

---

8. Please indicate if the following departments are represented on the Partnership Committee/Task Force. If the organization does not have the department, mark the "not applicable" (N.A) section.

	Yes	No	N.A.
President/ C.E.O.	_____	_____	_____
Personnel/Human Resources Dept.	_____	_____	_____
Public Relations/ Community Relations	_____	_____	_____
Marketing/ Sales Dept.	_____	_____	_____
Engineering/ Research & Dev.	_____	_____	_____
Donations/ Contributions	_____	_____	_____
Business Systems/ Data Processing	_____	_____	_____
Finance/ Accounting	_____	_____	_____

Other departments represented (specify) ______________________________

____

____

9. *Which of the following activities have been incorporated in your Partnership?*

_____ *Providing guest speakers to school classes.*

_____ *Tours of your organization's facilities.*

_____ *Employees participating in school extracurricular activities.*

_____ *Employees serving as tutors.*

_____ *Providing teaching materials to the schools.*

_____ *Career shadowing.*

_____ *Mentor program.*

---

10. *Which of the following describes the outcome of the partnership to date? (check one)*

_____ The partnership has benefitted the school primarily

_____ The partnership has benefitted the organization primarily

_____ The partnership has benefitted both equally

---

11. *Does your organization have a means of evaluating the outcome of its Partnership program?*

Yes* _____ No _____

* *If so, how is it evaluated?* ____________________

____

____

12. *On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not at all important and 4 is very important, please rate each of the following statements:*

	Not at All Important			Very Important
The Partnership enables the organization to make contact with future employees and customers.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership is a means for the organization to be a "good corporate citizen" in the community.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership involvement improves employee morale.	1	2	3	4
Teachers and students understand their partner organization and its business better as a result of the partnership.	1	2	3	4
People in the organization understand the school and the education system better as a result of the Partnership.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership experience helps the organization adapt better to a changing society.	1	2	3	4

---

13. *If you were to describe the two most important benefits of the Partnership program to your organization, what would they be?*

____

____

____

Thank you for your filling this out. Please return it in the envelope provided. Indicate on the attached form if you would like to receive a summary of the survey results.

a/S.E.M. 91/01/08

APPENDIX H

CALGARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SURVEY

1. *What grade levels are involved in the Partnership?*

____

2. Approximately how many students are included in the Partnership?

____________ students.

3. *How long has your school been partnered with that organization?*

____________ years.

4. *Which of the following activities have been incorporated in your Partnership?*

_____ *Providing guest speakers to school classes.*

_____ *Tours of organization's facilities.*

_____ *Employees participating in school extracurricular activities.*

_____ *Employees serving as tutors.*

(continued on next page)

#4 (continued)

_____ Providing teaching materials to the schools.

_____ Career shadowing.

_____ Mentor program.

_____ School concerts/performances for the organization.

_____ Employees touring school facilities.

_____ Student shop work for the organization.

_____ Other innovative programs (specify)

____

____

----

5. Which of the following describes the outcome of the partnership to date? (check one)

_____ The partnership has benefitted the school primarily

_____ The partnership has benefitted the organization primarily

_____ The partnership has benefitted both equally

6. Which of the following are important reasons for having a partnership? On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not at all important and 4 is very important, please rate each of the following statements:

	Not at All Important			Very Important
The Partnership enables the organization to make contact with future employees and customers.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership is a means for the organization to be a "good corporate citizen" in the community.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership involvement improves employee morale.	1	2	3	4
Teachers and students understand their partner organization and its business better as a result of the partnership.	1	2	3	4
People in the organization understand the school and the education system better as a result of the Partnership.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership experience helps the organization adapt better to a changing society.	1	2	3	4

---

7. If you were to describe the two most important benefits of the Partnership program to your school, what would they be?

Thank you for your filling this out. Please return it in the envelope provided. Indicate on the attached form if you would like to receive a summary of the survey results.

SEM/sa 91/01/08

APPENDIX I

SURVEY OF CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

1. *Approximately how many school-business partnerships are in place in your area's Partnership program?*

____

---

2. *Approximately what percentage of partnerships in your area's partnership program are initiated by the following:*

_____ The Chamber of Commerce or a similar body

_____ The Board of Education

_____ Someone in a particular school

_____ Someone in a particular business or other partner organization

Other ______________________________

---

3. *In situations where a business initiates a partnership, what are the three most common job titles/corporate departments of the individual employee(s) who proposed such involvement?*

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

4. In your partnership program to date, what is the approximate level of involvement of the following business individuals or departments (or their equivalents) in partnership activities.

	NOT INVOLVED	SOMEWHAT INVOLVED	VERY INVOLVED
President/ C.E.O.	_____	_____	_____
Personnel/Human Resources Dept.	_____	_____	_____
Public Relations/ Community Relations	_____	_____	_____
Marketing/ Sales Dept.	_____	_____	_____
Engineering/ Operations	_____	_____	_____
Donations/ Contributions	_____	_____	_____
Business Systems/ Data Processing	_____	_____	_____
Finance/ Accounting	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)			
____________________	_____	_____	_____
____________________	_____	_____	_____

5. In your experience, when organizations have a Partnership Steering Committee, a Partnership Task Force, or a similar body to coordinate their partnership activities, which parts of the organization are likely to be represented on that body.

	Not Likely	Likely
President/ C.E.O.	_____	_____
Personnel/Human Resources Dept.	_____	_____
Public Relations/ Community Relations	_____	_____
Marketing/ Sales Dept.	_____	_____
Engineering/ Research & Dev.	_____	_____
Donations/ Contributions	_____	_____
Business Systems/ Data Processing	_____	_____
Finance/ Accounting	_____	_____
Other (specify)		
________________	_____	_____

---

6. What are the most common job titles and departments of the Partnership "contact" person in businesses involved in a partnership?

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

7. On a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being the LEAST COMMON business contribution to partnerships and 4 being the MOST COMMON business partnership activities in your partnership program, please rate the following:

______ *Providing guest speakers to school classes.*

______ *Tours of your organization's facilities.*

______ *Employees participating in school extracurricular activities.*

______ *Employees serving as tutors.*

______ *Providing teaching materials to the schools.*

______ *Career shadowing.*

______ *Mentor program.*

---

8. Which of the following are important reasons for having partnerships? On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not at all important and 4 is very important, please rate each of the following statements:

	Not at All Important			Very Important
The Partnership enables the business to make contact with future employees and customers.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership is a means for the business to be a "good corporate citizen" in the community.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership involvement improves employee morale.	1	2	3	4
Teachers and students understand their partner organization and its business better as a result of the partnership.	1	2	3	4

#8 (continued)

People in the business understand the school and the education system better as a result of the Partnership.	1	2	3	4
The Partnership experience helps the business adapt better to a changing society.	1	2	3	4

9. *If you were to describe the two most important benefits of the Partnership program to businesses, what would they be?*

____

____

____

Thank you for your filling this out. Please return it in the envelope provided. Indicate on the attached form if you would like to receive a summary of the survey results.

SEM/pa 91/01/08

Request for Partnership Survey Summary

NAME ______________________________

ADDRESS ______________________________

____

____

____

Survey summaries are expected to be available by April, 1991.

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Statements of How the Partnership Benefits

I. ORGANIZATION RESPONSES

Responses to open-ended question asking for "the most important benefits of the Partnership program to your organization".

A: 1) Access to a "resource" of young people
2) A chance for "big business" to show its "human face" in a very human way

B: 1) "Community involvement"
2) People in the organization understand the school and the education system better

C: 1) Community exposure
2) Community involvement

D: 1) Corporate contribution to Community
2) Assist young people in getting an education

E: 1) Gives us an opportunity to support Canada's educational system at a level other than post-secondary
2) An excellent addition to our "community relations" efforts

F: 1) Opportunity to be a "good corporate citizen" in the community
2) People in the organization understand the education system better.

G: 1) better morale for the employee
2) being able to give something back to the community and to have an impact on its future/development

H: 1) helping the school get items they require
2) a sense of involvement for both our employees and the students
3) helping in our community

I: 1) being a "good corporate citizen"
2) providing the business with an understanding of the school system

J: 1) Provides opportunities for staff personal development
2) Community involvement in positive environment

K: 1) An opportunity to assist underprivileged through "hands-on" participation
2) Being an elementary school, our involvement hopefully

raises the expectation standards for the future of those we help.

L: 1) School system better understands and perhaps appreciates the organization's role
   2) Organization employees feel good about their contribution

M: 1) To increase our Community Service profile in-house and in the community at large
   2) To provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and musical performances in a venue that is in the forefront

N: 1) Student learning experiences
   2) Impression upon students as to what the working world is like and what's expected of them.

O: 1) Having committee members interact directly with students
   2) Assisting students

P: 1) Exposure to youth, energy and changing ideas and values
   2) The opportunity to return something to the community in which we live and which provides us with a livelihood

Q: 1) Injection of enthusiastic people
   2) Long-term development of personnel

R: 1) A vehicle to better relate Education and Industry, both our needs and yours
   2) A tremendous sense of being good corporate citizens.

S: 1) Community interaction
   2) Humanizing experience

II. OTHER CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Responses as "the two most important benefits of the Partnership program to business".

A: 1) active participation in the education of the 21st century's work force is a necessity for economic survival
   2) it offers industry/business the opportunity to help ensure that tomorrow's adults will be equal to their challenges and opportunities

B: 1) it's creative -- one-on-one dialogue
   2) to share with teachers not what to teach but what students will need to know
   3) window on the real world for students

C: 1) useful co-op education students available

2) disseminated public information about their business

D: 1) an opportunity to share in something meaningful beyond their present experience
2) an opportunity to be involved in shaping the future of the community and to be recognized for their contribution

E: 1) making contact with students so they will be better exposed to their sector and will consider careers in their field.

F: 1) Better understanding of education system and ways in which students can be helped by business involvement
2) Makes employees feel good about their company.

G: 1) Provides business with accurate information on present education.

III. SCHOOL RESPONSES

Responses to "What are the two most important benefits of the Partnership program to your school"

A: 1) The "Human Resources" (time) donated by partners
2) The "Physical Resources" donated by partners

B: 1) Funds donated to school
2) Training and job opportunities not otherwise possible

C: 1) greater awareness of interdependency and interrelationships between school/business
2) how from a real tangible standpoint learning can be bridged and purposeful in everyday life

D: 1) financial support
2) interaction between school and partnership

E: 1) A sharing of facilities to enhance student learning
2) a better understanding of our neighbourhood partner

F: 1) mutual respect and assistance
2) student interaction with professional business people (our district is largely blue collar so such interaction is invaluable)

G: 1) financial assistance
2) enthusiasm and expertise of personnel involved in activities

H: 1) greater access to community expertise
2) development of shared concerns about kids and education

I: 1) helps students bridge gap between school and work world
2) added to and enriched programs through speakers, tours, etc.

J: 1) awareness
2) assistance

K: 1) The corporate partner has been able to "showcase" and highlight student accomplishments
2) The partnership has increased student awareness about the business world via in-class guest speakers, and by being able to tour the corporate partner's facilities

L: 1) student benefits
2) learning and understanding from one another

M: 1) people helping people model is excellent for students
2) various support measures to students and families operated by corporate partner

N: 1) financially assist in so many ways
2) volunteer assistance

O: 1) extra adult helpers who care
2) better knowledge for our teachers and parents of a major community business

P: 1) children and parents see that other organizations than the school have responsibilities for education
2) our pool of resources has been increases substantially i.e. speakers, displays.

Q: 1) increased awareness of the rigors of the business world
2) source for guest speakers/outlet for work experience

R: 1) primary benefit is the computer/high tech support/resource provided by the partner
2) secondary benefit is the greater understanding of business organization, culture and the changing society we live in.

APPENDIX M

Calgary Board of Education

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 5, 1991

TO: CBE Partners

FROM: Dianne Clark
Community Relations Officer

RE: SURVEY

Sam McBride of Canadian Western Natural Gas is doing some research on the CBE's Partnerships in Education Program. As part of that research, he has asked Calgary partners to complete a survey mailed to them in November/December.

Canadian Western is one of our partners, and your cooperation in completing the survey and returning it to him as soon as possible would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance.

Dianne

Students' Perceptions of Careers in Public Relations

by

Cathy Coleman Morton, M.A.

School of Mass Communications
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas

Presented to the Public Relations division at the annual
AEJMC Convention, Boston, Massachusetts, August 1991.

Students' Perceptions of Careers in Public Relations

Between 1970 and 1980 the total number of students enrolled in undergraduate public relations sequences grew nine-fold, from slightly more than 2000 to 18,000 (Walker, 1982) and has continued to grow into the late 1980s (Becker & Engleman, 1988; Gersh, 1989), with an enrollment of more than 21,000 projected in fall 1988 by Becker (1989). However, a survey of 1987 graduates of journalism and mass communications programs (Becker & Engleman, 1988) suggested public relations graduates are not finding the jobs they had prepared for within their field. Six months after graduation only 46.5% of the Class of 1987 had taken jobs in public relations (27.3%) or related fields (19.2%). The growth in the number of public relations majors coupled with the percentage of graduates who do not find employment in communications raises questions about students' knowledge and understanding of career options in public relations.

Research in public relations education has been directed toward practitioners an educators to determine what skills and knowledge they consider important to the public relations graduate. There appears to have been little research to explore why students choose careers in public relations and what skills they anticipated would be helpful to them in their preparation for entry-level employment. This study examined responses from students at five universities who were beginning their upper-division courses in public relations and sought to determine student perceptions about the field of public relations.

While professionals can give direction to educators on public relations curriculum, it was anticipated that examining how public relations students understand their major would be helpful to educators advising students who enter public relations sequences.

The basis for this study was two current debates in public relations education. The two issues are interrelated. Both are concerned with providing the best and most appropriate educational experience for students:

(1.) What course of study should be emphasized in public relations curriculum?

(2.) What skills are essential to the public relations student, both for an entry-level position and to provide promise for promotions?

Brody (1985) pointed out that no concensus appears to be developing to bring professionals and educators together on how best to meet the needs of students and practitioners. In the early 1970s the first Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education was established (Bateman & Cutlip, 1975). In 1983 a second Commission, established jointly by the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Educators Section of PRSA, was charged with developing and recommending a public relations curriculum for U.S. colleges and universities.

Results of a survey conducted in 1985 for the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education indicated "virtual unanimity of opinion between public realtions practitioners and educators on what public relations education should be" (Anderson, p. 18). Practitioners and educators agreed that facility with the English language is the most important and basic skill required in public relations practice. This includes writing skills in all communications disciplines. Marketing was the essential business course most often mentioned. Management was the second most often mentioned course.

The study further suggested that public relations curricula should emphasize research, planning, evaluation, electronic communications, and ethics. Respondents also placed a high value on internships (a rating of 6.67 of a possible 7). Taylor (1988) suggested that internships were important in crystallizing vocational self-concepts and work values, reducing reality shock for new professionals, and increasing employment opportunities. The emphasis on internships reflects the need for educators to continue efforts to assure quality practical experiences for students prior to graduation (Anderson, 1986).

The latest Commission on Public Relations Research (1987) expanded earlier reports and addressed course content as well as course descriptions in an effort to standardize public relations coursework.

Implications for using the data gathered in the Commission's study (1987) lie in counseling and advising students both before they select public relations as a major and as they advance toward graduation. While there is a continuing difference of opinion on what is the most important element in public relations education and in which academic unit public relations sequences should be housed, educators are challenged to prepare students to meet the expectations of the professional world.

In 1988 the Body of Knowledge Task Force of the Public Relations Society of America Research Committee published "The Public Relations Body of Knowledge" as a resource and authority for public relations educators and professionals (Body, 1988). This work is a part of the effort to standardize public relations education.

Citing the 1981 Smith-Buchwald Commission report, Baxter (1985) emphasized the importance of faculty counseling and staff advisement in directing students to courses which will best prepare them for careers in public relations.

The underlying questions for this study were whether public relations educators are imparting these professional expectations to students: Are educators providing adequate information about or exposure to the practice of public relations? Are educators advising students to take the range of courses identified by professionals as essential to an adequate education for public relations practitioners? Are educators counseling students about the skills necessary for public relations practitioners?

In reviewing the literature on college professional education and its relationship to stress and burnout, Endres and Wearden (1989) criticized college professional education. They suggested that professional education tends to create unrealistic expectations for students regarding the job world; often it is not thorough, practical, or relevant enough; does not sufficiently train students in interpersonal skills; does not provide adequate information on the nature of bureaucratic organizations and how to function within the constraints of the work setting; and does not teach students how to cope with uncertainty, change, conflict, stress and burnout.

Professionals have criticized the educational background of public relations graduates. Alan Metrick (1988), an executive vice president of David M. Grant & Partners, issued a poignant indictment in an editorial in Public Relations Journal: "... the recent graduates I've seen with public relations degrees struck me as being woefully unprepared for a career in this business despite their completing what amounts to trade schooling in the guise of a university degree."

It is the responsibility of educators, in the classroom and as advisors, to respond to these criticisms. To respond educators must know what students perceive about their career.

For more than a quarter century, journalism students have been the subjects of research on career choice and job perception (Bowers, 1974; Lubell, 1959). More recently, a researcher has begun to look at advertising majors to determine their motivation and expectations of the workforce (Schweitzer, 1988).

As public relations has emerged as a separate academic sequence in schools of journalism and mass communication, and as efforts continue to develop the public relations curriculum, it is appropriate to investigate the perceptions and motivation of students who choose to prepare for careers.

Literature Review

A review of recent literature examines the curricula and skills necessary for the public relations student in an entry level position.

Coorientation theory (Newcomb, 1953) raises questions about the orientation of two individuals or groups/organizations to the same object or concept. In this case the concept was the practice of public relations: What is the degree of congruence that students have with professionals in their beliefs or perceptions of the practice of public relations? The research in this study sought to compare what professionals want and what students perceive about their career choice.

Fewer than a dozen colleges and universities offered degrees in public relations in the 1960s. By the beginning of the 1980s hundreds of public relations majors were available on hundreds of campuses across the country. This rapid growth has prompted a continuing debate about the content of public relations sequences (Walker 1982, 1984).

A 1981 survey of communications professionals in Southern California revealed a positive response to public relations education—contrary to the unfavorable reaction of professionals in the related fields of advertising, marketing, and journalism toward professional education (Pinzon, 1989). This note is made to emphasize that the debate is on content of the courses rather than quality of the students.

Historically public relations education has been a mix of liberal arts education and professional training. Students have been taught not only how (technical skills in writing and production as well as management concepts) to communicate but also what and why. Teaching "what" and "why" has pushed students into liberal arts and science courses to examine the environment in which they will work (Commission, 1987).

A lack of uniformity in public relations programs requires a review of the academic background of undergraduates with degrees in public relations. Sequences offered in business schools emphasize basic business courses; sequences accredited by ACEJMC emphasize writing skills; and speech communications programs emphasize rhetoric and persuasion. In each instance, the graduates may be weak in other areas (Brody, 1988).

Corporate public relations practitioners responding to a 1984 survey agreed that writing and other journalism-related (reporting, editing, etc.) skills should be the first priority of public relations students preparing for jobs in the corporate sector (Baxter, 1985). Practitioners and educators agree that a minor in business is most appropriate for public relations students (Anderson, 1986; Commission, 1987). English as a minor is a distant second, followed by economics and finance (Anderson, 1986).

Based on a study of public relations practitioners, Turk (1989) insisted that non-communication skills -- specifically, planning, problem-solving, budgeting and analytical skills -- as well as technical skills such as writing and graphics must be included in the public relations curriculum. According to Turk, failure to develop these skils could limit the transition from an entry-level technician role to a management role. Turk added that an understanding of ethics and social responsibility is also important to the public relations graduate.

Walker (1984) concluded from his 20 years of teaching and another 10 years of teaching and full-time practice of public relations that employers look first for strong communication skills, especially writing and editing. According to Walker, if the prospective employee has knowledge of public relations and its practice, it is a "plus."

Parsons (1988) noted "extreme discomfort with creative work, including writing" in public relations students surveyed as part of a study of 585 communications majors. Because the path to management is often through writing employee publications, Parsons identified the level of discomfort as a potential problem which professionals and educators might want to explore further.

Wakefield and Cottone (1986) recognized the need for a more comprehen sive perspective in public relations education; and, in a later article (1987) identified the knowledge and skill areas important to public relations employers. Their analysis of 188 responses from 120 agencies and the public relations directors of 68 corporations and governmental and nonprofit organizations revealed a greater emphasis on knowledge and skill in interpersonal communication (customer/client relations, decision-making and problem solving), general copywriting and promotional writing than on skill in writing news releases. The data also revealed significant employer emphasis on management (project management, coordination of creative efforts, budgeting), persuasive and interpersonal communication (sales and service), promotion design and writing rather than on media relations. In other words, the role of the public relations professional has expanded beyond working with the news media.

The survey used in this study incorporates areas of knowledge and skills identified by Wakefield and Cottone in their survey of public relations employers and seeks to identify a relationship between professional needs/desires and student perceptions.

A discussion of relevant skills and knowledge requires recognition of the various roles public relations practitioners play. Broom and Smith (1979) identified at least four roles: expert prescriber, communication technician, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator. Dozier's (1983) analysis of the roles confirmed that the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator roles were correlated; he offered two descriptive roles: communications technician and communications manager.

In 1985 Broom and Dozier observed that while movement into the manager role was accompznied by increased job satisfaction, the greatest increase in satisfaction was among the technicians who had remained in that role for the previous six years. Their findings further indicated an increase in income and participation in the decision-making process when practitioners moved beyond the technician role. They noted further that advancement was more frequent for men. "Clearly," they concluded, "professional growth in public relations is a function of the practitioner's gender and role" (p. 55).

Culbertson (1985) concluded that the communication technician role, which focuses on writing and production, was distinct from the other three. He suggested further that the communication technician role may include a narrow orientation which focuses on the technical aspects of production and a broader orientation which emphasizes writing, publications and media relations. And he identified the dominant role-orientation factor as decision-making -- a factor which included the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator roles described by Broom and his colleagues. Culbertson suggested that educators model their teaching on their experience with public relations roles.

Research Questions

The literature review demonstrates the interest public relations professionals have in the educational background of potential employees. It reaffirms an emphasis on writing skills which historically has been the foundation of education in mass communication. At the same time it suggests that a broader, more comprehensive education is appropriate for students preparing for careers in public relations.

How public relations students understand and respond to the expectations of professionals is an important factor in the educational process. It is reasonable to expect that students whose perception of public relations practice is similar to that of the professionals for whom they will work will be more successful in finding their first job and in advancing in the field.

Specifically, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What academic areas do public relations majors identify as important to support their public relations education?

2. What skills and experience do public relations majors identify as significant to their careers in public relations?

3. How do student perceptions compare to concerns of public relations professionals reflected in recent studies?

Methodology

Students in public relations writing classes at five universities were selected to participate in the study. In each case students had completed the prerequisite journalism and mass communications courses and the public relations writing class was the first upper division public relations course. Universities were purposively selected for geographic variation: California State University, Fullerton (Department of Communications), Kansas State University (Department of Journalism and Mass Communications), Marquette University (College of Communication, Journalism and Performing Arts), Texas Tech University (School of Mass Communications), and University of South Carolina (College of Journalism and Mass Communications). All are affiliated with the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications (ASJMC) and are accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

While the sample was purposively selected, it is geographically diverse and, in the aggregate, should be representative of public relations students nationwide. And, while a random national sample would be more scientific, this research was preliminary.

The questionnaire was constructed using a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions concerning course work and job identification provided the opportunity for students to give a variety of answers which were later grouped by the researcher into categories for data entry. Closed-ended questions were either multiple choice or semantic] differential scales. Multiple choice questions to measure student activity, influences upon their choice of public relations as a major, and demographics were developed. Each question offered several mutually exclusive answers with "other" offered as an alternative in some instances. Semantic differential scales were used to measure student feelings; respondents were given five choices, from "very important" to "unimportant" or "a great deal" to "very little."

Faculty members at the five participating universities were contacted by telephone and their assistance requested in administering the survey. Questionnaires and instructions were mailed in bulk to cooperating faculty members. Pre-paid return envelopes were provided to return the completed surveys. This survey method was used because of the relative ease and the low cost of collecting data from a specialized audience.

One hundred seventy-seven students were enrolled in classes selected by faculty members at the participating schools; 140 students completed questionnaires; and 134 questionnaires were used in the analysis, for a response rate of 75.7%. Six of the completed questionnaires were not used because the students completing them were identified as advertising majors.

Responses were coded and entered into the statistical program Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS-X). For the semantic differential scales, responses were coded from "1" for "very important" or "a great deal" to "5" for "unimportant" or "very little." Frequency distributions were calculated for the total sample and for the individual universities for comparison. Explanatory responses to open-ended questions were grouped manually for discussion with the results.

Crosstabs were run to observe student involvement in professional organizations and activities and important factors in selecting a major by both sex and class. Crosstabs also were run to observe variations in favorite/least favorite class by gender, class and experiences.

A factor analysis grouped responses to a question about skills necessary to the public relations professional. New variables were created and compared by crosstabulation with responses to questions about favorite courses and students' experience level.

Results

Demographics

More than two-thirds (69%) of the students were female, and one-half (50%) were under 22 years of age. The large number of female students is consistent with the increasing numbers of women in public relations (Barnes, 1969). Nearly three-fourths (72%) of the students overall were seniors approaching graduation. Only in classification of students did the students at the five universities vary substantially. Virtually all (97%) of the Texas Tech students and 89% of the Kansas State students were seniors, but only 45% of the Marquette students were seniors.

Approximately one-fourth (24%) of all the students chose to minor in business; however the variation is from 13% at California State to 43% at Texas Tech. More than one-fourth (26%) chose minors in various areas in the arts and sciences. Again there was a wide variation — from 12% at Texas Tech to 50% at Marquette. Sixty percent of the students had previously pursued a major other than public relations, with the only substantial variation being 41% at South Carolina. Overall 22% of the respondents had been business majors, and 16% had been majors in other communications fields. Again a wide variation was noted. Five percent of the Marquette students and 6% of the South Carolina students had previously majored in business and 37% of the Kansas State students had majored in business. Forty percent of the students at Marquette had previously majored in other areas of communications although the students at the other schools were fairly close to the overall percentage of 16%.

In general, the respondents were not actively involved in student activities, either professional or social. Fewer than half (40%) were members of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). Marquette, however, does not have a PRSSA chapter; and the other percentages varied from 18% at South Carolina to 60% at California State. Crosstabs revealed that senior students were more likely to be involved in PRSSA than juniors: 42% of the seniors and 33% of the juniors were members. Females (43%) were more likely than males (31%) to be members.

Knowledge Important to Public Relations Professionals

The students were also asked to indicate how important a number of factors were to public relations professionals. A semantic differential scale ranging from 1 for "a great deal" to 5 for "very little" measured the students' perception of the knowledge important to the practice of public relations. Overall, the students believed an understanding or knowledge of public opinion was most important to public relations practitioners. Second was knowledge of marketing. Economics and accounting were perceived to be the least important. The mean scores among the five universities were consistent in identifying public opinion and marketing as more important or at least important. There were slight variations in the mean scores of the other variables among the schools. The variables are listed in Table 1 in descending order of perceived importance.

Marketing and public opinion were also the most often mentioned factors when the students were asked what five areas they anticipated they would spend most of their time on in their first jobs.

Experience and Skills Important to Public Relations Professionals

Somewhat more than a third (37%) of the students completing the questionnaire had experience on high school and/or college publications. Notably 100% of the students at Kansas State had gained experience on a college publication. Only 25% of the students overall had completed an internship in public relations: 31% of the males and 23% of the females; 37% of the juniors and 22% of the seniors. Students who had completed internships worked in both nonprofit and corporate settings. Similarly, fewer than half (45%) of the students reported having had any experience in public relations: 41% of the males and 47% of the females; 63% of the juniors and 39% of the seniors. Students who indicated they had experience in public relations had, in most instances, worked on their college campuses as volunteers for campus organizations (Table 2).

The students agreed (M = 1.2) that practical experience was the most important of five variables in getting their first job in public relations. Table 3 shows the five variables in descending order of the importance identified by the students.

Almost 70% of the students responding anticipated they would work in public relations after graduation. The largest group, almost half (48%), hoped for corporate work. The students were optimistic about employment opportunities. Almost half (49%) expected to find their first job before graduation. However, they were less optimistic about salary expectations. More than three-quarters (81%) expected a starting annual salary between $15,000 and $25,000. More than half (60%) expected to work between 40 and 50 hours per week.

A factor analysis identified only one clear factor from among the 32 skills listed as potentially important to the public relations practitioner. The factor included variables as diverse as media relations and writing for various media, graphics and design, planning special events, and fundraising. To be retained in the factor a variable had to have a primary loading of .60 or more and no secondary loading on other factors above .30 (Burgoon, Burgoon & Buller, 1986). The factor, called technical skills, explained only 28% of the variance (Table 4).

Students were asked to identify, from among all the required courses for their major, their favorite class. Responses were grouped by the researcher into seven categories. Twenty-eight percent of the students (37 students) identified a writing/technical skills course as their favorite. With an open-ended question students were also asked to identify, from among all the required courses for their major, their least favorite class. Responses were grouped by the researcher into eight categories. Thirty-two percent of the students (43 students) identified a writing/technical skills course as their least favorite.

Crosstabs were run to determine the relationship between identification of a writing/technical skills course as either the favorite or least favorite course and students' experiences, gender, and classification. The only statistically significant relationship observed was between students who identified writing/technical skills as their favorite course and experience or lack of experience in an internship.

Summary and Conclusions

This study attempted to answer three questions:

1. What academic areas do public relations majors identify as important to support their public relations education?

2. What skills and experience do public relations majors identify as significant to their careers in public relations?

3. How do student perceptions compare to concerns of public relations professionals reflected in recent studies?

There was no statistically significant difference observed between male and female students in any of the statistical analyses — evidence that the gender gap may, indeed, be narrowing in public relations, and that we can begin to look at "students" rather than "males" and "females."

When students were asked to rank variables in terms of importance to them in selecting public relations as a major, the leading reasons observed were the desire to develop communications skills and the desire to develop planning/decision-making skills. These results are confusing when considered with results which indicated almost one-third (32%) of the students' least favorite class was a writing/technical skills course and that management was the most seldom mentioned "favorite" class.

Students agreed that practical experience and an internship in public relations were the most important factors in getting a first job in public relations. However, fewer than half (45%) of the students reported having any practical experience in public relations, and only 25% of the students have had an internship in public relations. These results should be reflected in students' perceptions about the work world.

The failure to find statistically significant relationships between factors important to students in selecting their major when the results were crosstabbed both by gender and classification suggests that many students might have similar questions about their choice of public relations as a career.

Results of the study indicate almost half (49%) of the students expected to find their first job in public relations before they graduate from college. This high expectation is interesting in view of recent research which indicated only 46.5% of students who graduated from college in 1987 with degrees in public relations had jobs in public relations or related fields six months after graduation (Becker & Engleman, 1988).

The conflicting results, seem to indicate that educators should take a more active role in advising students about the realities of careers in public relations.

Students consistently identified a knowledge of public opinion as essential to the practice of public relations (M = 1.2). In the same set of questions, however, the students ranked politics, government structure, and economics near the bottom. This raises questions about the students' understanding of what influences public opinion and how it is formed. Students also ranked a knowledge of marketing high (M = 1.4) but only one-quarter (24%) of the students had declared a minor academic area in business. The students do seem to perceive the importance of supporting their public relations courses with a business background.

The lack of experience of the students overall should be considered important in their perception of knowledge which they will use in the practice of public relations.

A factor analysis of skills potentially important to the public relations practitioner produced interesting results. The skill variables were drawn from a list used by Wakefield and Cottone (1987) in their survey of public relations employers. The analysis identified only one strong factor from among the 32 skills listed. The factor included media relations and writing for various media, graphics and design, planning special events, and fundraising — skills which might be termed technical skills.

Failure of the factor analysis to identify more than one factor from the list suggests that students do not see beyond the technical skills and do not grasp the broader concepts of public relations management.

Recent studies of professionals cited previously are consistent in emphasizing strong writing skills in the public relations curriculum. Professionals agree also that a business minor is most appropriate for the public relations major. One of the purposes of this study was to determine how student perceptions compared to professional perceptions in line with the coorientation theory.

It seems apparent that students perceive public relations to be a field which requires skill in written communication, but they are — as Parsons (1988) noted — extremely uncomfortable with the idea. Responses indicated that almost one-third (32%) of the students identified a writing/technical skills course as their least favorite class. Further, students perceive business knowledge and courses as important to the practice of public relations, but most do not choose to minor in business and they fail to identify business skills as a strong factor. Fewer than one-quarter (24%) of the students had chosen to minor in business.

The results seem to indicate there is no coorientation between professinals' and students' perceptions of what is necessary to prepare for entry-level jobs in public relations.

The results of this study suggest faculty is not providing adequate information about public relations as a career and to challenge educators and academic advisors who counsel students to become more involved with the students, to explain course content and relevance to them, and to direct them to appropriate courses to compliment their degree in public relations.

Areas for Future Research

The results of this investigation of public relations majors revealed several areas for future research.

One line of research might investigate recruitment programs in schools of mass communications to determine how the public relations sequence is presented to students and how faculty present opportunities in public relations to students.

This study also raises questions about how students perceive the relevance of various courses to their major. Future research might explore students' understanding of the relationship of various academic disciplines to public relations.

Findings in this study raise questions about why students choose public relations as a major when they apparently do not like courses which are basic to the practice of public relations. In other words, if a student's perception of public relations is technical skills oriented and the student dislikes writing/technical skills courses, why does the student major in public relations?

TABLE 1

KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS BY UNIVERSITIES

	Mean Responses					
	Texas Tech	Marquette	South Carolina	Kansas State	Cal State Fullerton	Overall Mean*
Public Opinion	1.091	1.200	1.176	1.105	1.244	1.172
Marketing	1.273	1.450	1.176	1.421	1.467	1.373
Organizational Management	1.576	1.550	1.294	1.421	1.356	1.440
Personnel Management	1.488	1.650	1.412	1.421	1.578	1.522
Law	1.788	2.050	1.706	1.632	1.956	1.851
Budgeting	1.939	2.000	1.471	1.789	1.978	1.881
Psychology	2.212	2.200	1.353	1.789	1.978	1.963
Politics	2.091	1.900	1.706	2.211	2.200	2.067
Government Structure	1.909	2.100	1.824	2.158	2.267	2.082
Economics	2.121	2.500	2.000	2.263	2.600	2.343
Accounting	3.242	3.550	2.706	3.263	3.178	3.201

* 1 = very important, 5 = unimportant

TABLE 2

EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS BY UNIVERSITIES

	Texas Tech	Marquette	South Carolina	Kansas State	Cal State Fullerton	% Total*
High school publication	18%	60%	41%	58%	31%	37%
College publication	39	30	24	100	16	37
Internship	33	55	12	32	7	25
Public relations experience	46	70	47	47	31	45

* Totals more than 100% due to multiple answers.

TABLE 3

FACTORS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS IN GETTING A FIRST JOB BY UNIVERSITIES

	Mean Responses					
	Texas Tech	Marquette	South Carolina	Kansas State	Cal State Fullerton	Overall Mean*
Practical experience	1.212	1.100	1.235	1.211	1.333	1.239
Internship in public relations	1.606	1.200	1.765	1.789	1.267	1.478
"Connections"	1.424	1.950	1.529	1.579	1.644	1.612
Portfolio (demonstrated skills)	1.636	1.550	1.353	1.526	1.800	1.627
Advanced degree	2.636	2.350	2.059	2.579	2.289	2.396

* 1 = very important, 5 = unimportant

TABLE 4

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SKILLS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS

Factor = Technical Skills	Value
Writing direct mail pieces	.73772
Writing slide shows/film strips	.72473
Writing corporate publications	.71434
Graphics/design of slide shows/film strips	.70462
Planning trade shows/exhibits	.69970
Graphics/design of promotional films/videos	.69199
Writing training and promotional films/videos	.64393
Convention/meeting planning	.62094
Fundraising and development	.61969
Graphics/design of print advertising	.57067
Writing news releases	.55973
Graphics/design of corporate publications	.55896
Planning special events	.55598

TABLE 4 (continued)

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SKILLS CONSIDERED
IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS

	Value
Speech writing	.54013
Managing projects	.52665
Working with the news media	.51499

Percent of variance explained = 28.4

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How Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners Define Lying

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How Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners Define Lying

By Michael Ryan and David L. Martinson

Journalists and public relations persons hold similar views about what is and is not lying as practitioners supply information about two hypothetical events: the firing of a basketball coach and nuclear waste disposal problems facing a research laboratory. The 120 respondents in the nationwide survey do not define lying differently if the practitioner works for a public or private organization.

Is it permissible for a public relations practitioner to withhold from a journalist information vital to the understanding of an important story when the journalist has not specifically asked for that information? Would it matter whether the information related to a potential threat to public health or to an issue that might effect only a half dozen people? Would it make any difference if the practitioner worked for a public or private organization? Would one say the practitioner was lying in one or all of these situations?

Ethicists have long debated the meaning of lying and whether some lies are appropriate. A few have agreed with Machiavelli that some persons have a positive duty to lie.[1] To Machiavelli, one cannot be a great leader if he or she is not willing to lie.

And some have agreed with Kant, who took an absolute position against lying.[2] He argued against the telling of any lie, even one that would have a good result or that would help someone avoid catastrophe. Kant claimed lies always harm human beings because the lie violates the source of law.

Most ethicists have given more serious attention to the views of philosophers like St. Augustine, who defined lying as trying to deceive people by telling them something other than what was really in one's heart: "For, a person is to be judged as lying or not lying according to the intention in his own mind, not according to the truth or falsity of the matter itself."[3] And he took a rigorous view in the debates about lying: One should detest all lies.[4]

The admonitions to detest all lies were difficult to live by. According to Bok:

> Many ways were tried to soften the prohibition, to work around it, and to allow at least a few lies. Three different paths were taken: to allow for pardoning of some lies; to claim that some deceptive statements are not falsehoods, merely misinterpreted by the listener; and finally to claim that certain falsehoods do not count as lies.[5]

St. Augustine helped establish the basis for the "pardonable" lie when he set up a hierarchy of eight kinds of lies and stated that the more abhorrent lies were far less easy to pardon than those lies that save someone from harm and that hurt no one.[6]

Aquinas created a hierarchy of three kinds of lies: malicious lies, lies told in jest and helpful lies.[7] He viewed the latter types as less serious, and more pardonable, although he agreed with St. Augustine that every lie is a sin.

Others tried to get around the prohibitions against lying by arguing that lies were not lies when the speakers included "mental reservations": that is, they say something untrue to someone and then add a qualification in their own minds.[8] For example, if one is asked whether she had embezzled money from her company, she might answer "no," but then add the mental reservation that she had never touched company cash, only stocks. Such speakers held themselves blameless for someone else's "misinterpretation."

Yet another way to get around the prohibition against lying was championed by Grotius, who argued that falsehood is, at times, justifiable, as when someone requests information to which he or she has no right.[9] For example, a source might argue today that it is just to lie to a journalist when a journalist requests information to which he or she has no specific right (e.g., tax returns or college transcripts).

Jeremy Bentham and Henry Sidgwick are only two of the philosophers who disagreed with the prohibitions by St. Augustine and Kant against all lies.[10] They argued that the consequences must determine whether a lie is justified. According to Sidgwick:

> Again, where deception is designed to benefit the person deceived, Common Sense seems to concede that it may sometimes be right. . . . But if the lawfulness of benevolent deception in any case be admitted, I do not see how we can decide when and how far it is admissible, except by considerations of

> expediency; that is, by weighing the gain of any particular deception against the imperilment of mutual confidence involved in all violation of truth.[11]

Lying, then, has been debated for centuries, and efforts to circumvent prohibitions against lying, or to justify or to excuse lying have gone on almost as long. Professionals in many fields--including public relations--have tried hard to justify or to excuse lying.

Some practitioners, for example, have tried to excuse or to justify lying by arguing that they could not survive if they did not lie. Finn, for instance, reported that many practitioners he interviewed ". . .became very aggressive about the fact that they felt we had to lie and do other unethical things in order to remain in business."[12]

Other practitioners have argued that their lies are justified on grounds that they are simply doing what they are told to do. Indeed, one practitioner was quoted by Ryan and Martinson as stating that one must not be guided by personal values:

> . A public relations professional whose personal sense of right and wrong conflicts with the management decisions of those he works for or represents should find another job or another client. Put another way, the public relations person who accepts the salary or fee of another, but attempts to substitute his/her personal sense of morality or ethicality for the judgments of his principals, commits the ultimate breach of ethical behavior.[13]

This viewpoint also was expressed by Cook, who is quoted as saying, "the PR man has as much to do with morality as a lawyer does with justice; counsel's role is to represent and to advocate."[14]

Some have tried to justify lying by redefining the term: half-lies are acceptable (that is, it is permissible to tell only half the truth by refusing to comment, or by stating that some information is unavailable because it is a trade secret or a matter of national security. For example, Ryan found that 43 percent of the practitioners he surveyed said, "Management insists that efforts be made to ignore or to conceal from various publics negative news about the organization."[15] And 56 percent agreed that "Management wants the public relations staff to tell the public what management wants the public to know, rather than what the public needs to know."[16] Practitioners frequently follow the directive to mislead the public.

This research will not resolve the issues raised over many years, but we do hope to learn something about how journalists and public relations practitioners view lying in a communication context. We used a mail survey to ask journalists and practitioners to read about two different hypothetical situations and to react to possible responses from public relations practitioners. Specifically, we tried to get some answers to the following general questions:

(Q_1) Do journalists' definitions of "lying" vary according to organization ownership (public or private), and do practitioners' definitions of "lying" vary according to organization ownership?

(Q_2) Do journalists and practitioners hold similar or different views about what is and is not lying as practitioners respond to reporters' questions about two hypothetical events?

(Q_3) Do the views vary according to the ownership (public or private) of the organization?

(Q_4) Do journalists and practitioners hold similar or different views as they respond to 10 general statements about lying?

The following hypotheses are tested:

(H_1) Regardless of vignette type, the responses of journalists who react to vignettes about public institutions will be significantly different from responses of those who react to vignettes about private institutions, and the responses of practitioners who react to public institution vignettes will be significantly different from responses of those who react to private institution vignettes.

(H_2) Regardless of vignette type, the responses of journalists will be significantly different from those of public relations practitioners as they react to responses practitioners can give to journalists who request information.

(H_3) Regardless of vignette type, the responses of journalists will be significantly different from those of practitioners when responses are broken down by organization type (public or private).

(H_4) The responses of journalists and practitioners will be significantly different as they react to ways lying is defined in the context of practitioners dealing with journalists.

Method

Two national samples, one of public relations practitioners and one of newspaper editors, were drawn for this research.

Two hundred newspapers representing each state were selected randomly from ***Editor & Publisher International Year Book***; the managing editor of each newspaper was included in the sample. A "managing editor" occasionally was not listed among the staff. In those instances, the highest ranking editor was selected; that typically meant news editor, associate editor, city editor or executive editor.

The sample of 200 practitioners was drawn from the ***Directory of the Public Relations Society of America***. Only those practitioners who were identified as public relations directors for public or private organizations were selected.

The 400 persons in the samples were mailed three-page questionnaires, cover letters explaining the research and self-addressed, stamped envelopes.

Respondents were asked in Part I of the questionnaire to read two vignettes about hypothetical situations involving journalists and public relations practitioners and to indicate which, if any, of three possible responses would be lying.

One vignette described a situation in which a successful basketball coach is pressured to resign by the administration and to take a position in the development office because he used unacceptable practices in recruiting two players. No one outside the parties immediately involved and the college administration knows about the recruiting violations and they are unlikely to become known unless someone directly involved talks. The university president and the athletic director tell the public relations director to state that the coach resigned and to say nothing of the recruiting violations. A journalist hears the rumor and contacts the public relations director.[17]

The second vignette described a situation in which the director of a university's medical research laboratory learns that the state's environmental protection agency will approve permits allowing the laboratory to start a profitable medical research program. Within the hour, the director learns that the toxic waste dump that was to dispose of the program's wastes will close within three months; that the dump operator will not announce the closing for six weeks; that it will be nearly impossible to find a new site quickly; and that the agency's approval will be delayed for years if the facts about the waste dump are revealed before the agency rules. Nobody outside the administration knows of these things. The director and the university president tell the practitioner to issue a release saying the lab will move to new quarters, and to say nothing about the waste disposal problem. A journalist hears about the rumor and contacts the public relations person.

Each of the vignettes was further divided by public/private status: That is, one university was public and one private in each of the two situations.

Each vignette was followed by three alternatives that a public relations director might consider in dealing with the journalist who heard the rumors and each respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which he/she agreed/disagreed that a practitioner would be lying in each situation.[18]

The questions were the same for each vignette. The public relations officer, in effect, is lying if he/she: (a) simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the release, (b) gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release and (c) asserts that rumors about the problems with the dump site are wrong.

Respondents were asked in Part II to respond to 10 statements (see Table 5) that outlined specific responses practitioners might give to questions from journalists. Each statement was followed by a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

A total of 105 editors responded to one of two mailings, for a return rate of 56 percent, and 105 practitioners responded for a return rate of 56 percent.

Results

Hypothesis 1 is: Regardless of vignette type, the responses of journalists who react to vignettes about public institutions will be significantly different from responses of those who react to vignettes about private institutions, and the responses of practitioners who react to public institution vignettes are significantly different from responses of those who react to private institution vignettes.

The hypothesis is not supported. Neither journalists nor practitioners responded significantly differently to the coach-firing vignettes when one organization was public and the other private, as shown in Table 1. Interestingly, the directions of responses suggest both practitioners and journalists have more stringent standards for private institutions than for public institutions.

Table One About Here

Furthermore, no mean differences are statistically significant for journalists or for practitioners whether the institutions is the waste disposal site vignette are public or private, as shown in Table 2. However, the means for private institutions are larger than those for the public institutions for three items; the mean for the public institution is larger for one item.

Table Two About Here

Data relating to Hypothesis 2--The responses of journalists will be significantly different from those of public relations practitioners as they react to responses practitioners can give to journalists who request information--are reported in Table 3.

As indicated, responses of practitioners and journalists are substantially the same, regardless of vignette type. No statisticaly significant differences were found following the t-tests. Journalists disagreed somewhat more than practitioners with items 1 (refuse to comment) and 3 (assert that rumors are wrong), in both conditions. Practitioners agreed slightly more that practitioners would be lying in giving these responses.

Table Three About Here

Hypothesis 3 predicted that, regardless of vignette type, the responses of journalists will be significantly different from those of practitioners when responses are broken down by organization type (public or private).

The hypothesis is not supported. Practitioners and journalists respond in much the same ways to Items 1, 2 and 3 for both public and private organizations in the coach-firing vignette; indeed, no mean differences are significant, and they are not in consistent directions, as shown in Table 4. For example, practitioners are somewhat more likely than journalists to call the first response (simply refuse to comment when asked for additional information) a lie, but they are less likely to call response two a lie.

Table Four About Here

Results are substantially the same for those who responded to the waste disposal site vignette. No means are significantly different, as shown in Table 4.

Ten items reported in Table 5 were used to measure general attitudes toward lying and to answer the fourth hypothesis, the responses of journalists and practitioners will be significantly different as they react to ways lying is defined in the context of practitioners dealing with journalists.

Table Five About Here

Mean responses to four items were signficantly different. Practitioners and journalists disagreed significantly that practitioners lie when they do not volunteer without being asked information that is intrinsically important to a story (Item 1), and that practitioners do not act unethically when they do not volunteer without being asked intrinsically important information (Item 4). Responses to Item 4 are the only ones that fall on opposite sides of the agree/disagree scale.

Practitioners and journalists also disagreed significantly that practitioners can be acting ethically when they withhold information about personnel decisions (Item 9) and when they withhold information about decisions, events or situations within an organization even when withholding information could have a negative impact on some publics (Item 10). Journalists' responses are on the disagree side of the scale, while practitioners' responses are at the scale's midpoint.

Conclusions

Practitioners and journalists tend to agree about what constitutes lying and what does not. Few seem to think practitioners lie when they simply refuse to comment when reporters ask questions that go beyond information reported in a news release. Interestingly, practitioners are slightly more likely to call that lying than are journalists, but neither group considers that lying.

Nor do many in either group consider it lying when a practitioner gives evasive answers to a reporter's request for information beyond that reported in a release. However, the means cluster near the midpoint of the scale, indicating that respondents only slightly disagree with the idea that this is lying--and indicating that a large minority of respondents do indeed think this is lying.

Journalists and practitioners both agree strongly that a practitioner is lying when he or she asserts that rumors about a situation are incorrect when they are in fact correct.

Apparently, a practitioner must really lie (that is, knowingly tell a reporter something that is different from what the practitioner knows is true) before journalists and practitioners do define it as lying. A refusal to comment is not viewed as a lie, and giving evasive answers (but not really telling an untruth) is not really a lie.

These results are not particularly encouraging. First, many journalists simply expect practitioners to avoid giving them all the relevant facts about a story; they don't trust practitioners to be forthcoming--usually because they know practitioners are not free to be open because they work for others, who presumably are less than candid. From the practitioner's viewpoint, it is difficult to communicate effectively when the one with whom you communicate expects you to be less than candid. Journalists seem to use practitioners as sources who are not very serious sources of information, but who must be contacted as a formality.

Second, it is discouraging to note that many define lying as telling a definite untruth, and they do not place "failure to tell the entire truth" into the category of lying.

Footnotes

[1] Niccolo Machiavelli, ***The Prince***, translated by Christian E. Detmold (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963).

[2] Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Benevolent Motives," in ***The Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosopy***, pp. 346-50. Edited and translated by Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

[3] St. Augustine, "Lying," in ***Treatises on Various Subjects***, vol. 16, p 55. Edited and translated by Roy J. Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1952).

[4] St. Augustine, "To Consentius: Against Lying," in ***Treatises on Various Subjects***, p. 129.

[5] Sissela Bok, ***Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*** (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 34.

[6] St. Augustine, op. cit., pp. 86-88.

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, "Question 110: Of the Vises Opposed to Truth, and First of Lying," in ***Summa Theologica***, vol. II, pp. 1663-1669. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947).

[8] J.P. Gury, ***Conpendium Theologiae Moralis***, pp. 221-23. Edited by A. Sabetti and T. Barrett (Rome: Ratisbon, 1902), and Bernard Haring, ***The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity***, vol. 3, pp. 556-76. Translated by Edwin G. Kaiser (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1966).

[9] Grotius, Hugo, ***On the Law of War and Peace***, bk. 3, chap. 1. Translated by Francis W. Kelsey (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1925).

[10] Jeremy Bentham, ***The Principles of Morals and Legislation***, chap. 16 (New York: MacMillan Co., Hafner Press, reissued in 1948), and Henry Sidgwick, ***The Methods of Ethics***, 7th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1907).

[11] Ibid., p. 316.

[12] David Finn, "Struggle for Ethics in Public Relations," ***Harvard Business Review***, 37:49-58 (January/February 1959), p. 51.

[13] Michael Ryan and David L. Martinson, "The PR Officer As Corporate Conscience," ***Public Relations Quarterly***, 28:20-23 (Summer 1983), p. 22.

[14] Raymond Simon, ***Public Relations: Concepts and Practices***, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), p. 382.

[15] Michael Ryan, "Organizational Constraints on Corporate Public Relations Practitioners," ***Journalism Quarterly***, 64:473-82 (Summer-Autumn 1987), p. 477.

[16] Ibid.

[17] The vignettes used in this research are available on request.

[18] Other options certainly are available to practitioners in this situation. One might argue, for example, that the administration must tell all the facts surrounding each situation and hope the arguments are persuasive. For research, however, it was important to allow only three possible alternatives.

Table 1

Respondents' Definitions of Lying about the Coach's Firing, by Organization Type

	Public College	Private College	T-value	Sig.
The public relations officer, in effect, is lying about the coach's firing at the private/public college if he/she:				
(1) Simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the news release.				
Practitioners	4.1	3.9	- .96	N.S.
Journalist	4.2	4.0	-1.2	N.S.
(2) Gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release.				
Practitioners	2.7	2.7	- .1	N.S.
Journalists	2.9	2.3	-2.8	.01
(3) Asserts that rumors about the recruiting violations and the reasons for the coach getting a new job are wrong.				
Practitioners	1.4	1.2	-1.6	N.S.
Journalists	1.1	1.2	.7	N.S.

Table 2

Respondents' Definitions of Lying about the Waste Disposal Site, by Organization Type

	Public College	Private College	T-value	Sig.
The public relations officer, in effect, is lying about the private/private laboratory's problem if he/she:				
(1) Simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the news release.				
Practitioners	3.9	3.7	-.8	N.S.
Journalists	4.0	4.0	1.1	N.S.
(2) Gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release.				
Practitioners	2.6	2.6	.0	N.S.
Journalists	2.8	2.3	-2.1	.04
(3) Asserts that rumors about the problems with the dump site are wrong.				
Practitioners	1.2	1.1	-.9	N.S.
Journalists	1.1	1.2	.9	N.S.

Table 3

Journalists,' Practitioners' Definitions of Lying, by Vignette Type

	Journalists	Practitioners	F	Sig.
The public relations officer, in effect, is lying about the coach's firing at the private/public college if he/she:				
(1) Simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the news release.				
Coach Firing	4.1	4.0	.5	N.S.
Waste Disposal	4.2	4.0	.6	N.S.
(2) Gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release.				
Coach Firing	2.7	2.7	.3	N.S.
Waste Disposal	2.9	2.9	.0	N.S.
(3) Asserts that rumors about the recruiting violations and the reasons for the coach getting a new job are wrong.				
Coach Firing	1.4	1.2	1.0	N.S.
Waste Disposal	1.2	1.1	.2	N.S.

Table 4

Respondents' Definitions of Lying, by Organization Type

	Coach Firing			Waste Disposal Site		
	Means	T-values	Sig.	Means	T-values	Sig.
Private Organization						
The public relations officer, in effect, is lying about the coach's firing at the private college if he/she:						
(1) Simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the news release.						
Practitioners	3.9	.5	N.S.	3.7	1.0	N.S.
Journalists	4.0			4.0		
(2) Gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release.						
Practitioners	2.7	-1.8	N.S.	2.6	-1.3	N.S.
Journalists	2.83			2.3		
(3) Asserts that rumors about the recruiting violations and the reasons for the coach getting a new job are wrong.						
Practitioners	1.2	.4	N.S.	1.1	1.1	N.S.
Journalists	1.2			1.2		
Public organization						
The public relations officer, in effect, is lying about the coach's firing at the public college if he/she:						
(1) Simply refuses to comment when the reporter asks questions that go beyond information reported in the news release.						
Practitioners	4.2	.4	N.S.	3.9	.1	N.S.
Journalists	4.1			4.0		

Table 4, continued

	Coach Firing			Waste Disposal Site		
	Means	T-values	Sig.	Means	T-values	Sig.
(2) Gives evasive answers to the reporter's direct request for information beyond that reported in the release.						
Practitioners	2.7	.8	N.S.	2.6	.8	N.S.
Journalists	2.9			2.8		
(3) Asserts that rumors about the recruiting violations and the reasons for the coach getting a new job are wrong.						
Practitioners	1.4	-1.8	N.S.	1.2	- .6	N.S.
Journalists	1.1			1.1		

Table 5

Responses to 10 General Questions about Lying

	Mean	F	Sig.
(1) Public relations practitioners lie when they do not volunteer to journalists (without being asked by the journalists) information that is intrinsically important if people are to understand a story.			
Practitioners	3.9	1.7	N.S.
Journalists	3.8		
(2) Public relations practitioners lie when they give evasive answers to journalists who are seeking information that is intrinsically important if people are to understand a story.			
Practitioners	2.6	.3	N.S.
Journalists	2.5		
(3) Public relations persons lie when they deny the accuracy of information they know is true.			
Practitioners	1.2	3.2	N.S.
Journalists	1.1		
(4) Public relations practitioners do not act unethically when they do not volunteer to journalists (without being asked by the journalists) information that is intrinscally important if people are to understand a story.			
Practitioners	2.4	5.2	.02
Journalists	2.8		

Table 5, continued

	Mean	F	Sig.
(5) Public relations practitioners do not act unethically when they give evasive answers to journalists who are seeking information that is intrinsically important if people are to understand a story.			
Practitioners	3.1	5.6	.02
Journalists	3.6		
(6) Public relations practitioners are not lying when they release to reporters what management tells them to--even when the information is false.			
Practitioners	4.6	.0	N.S.
Journalists	4.6		
(7) Public relations practitioners are not acting unethically when they release to reporters what management tells them to--even when the information is false.			
Practitioners	4.3	.5	N.S.
Journalists	4.5		
(8) Public relations practitioners who counsel management should not recommend withholding information that is intrinsically important for people to understand a story.			
Practitioners	1.8	3.0	N.S.
Journalists	1.5		
(9) Practitioners can be acting ethically when they withhold from journalists information about personnel decisions within an organization.			
Practitioners	1.8	3.5	N.S.
Journalists	2.1		

Table 5, continued

	Mean	F	Sig.
(10) Practitioners can be acting ethically when they withhold information about decisions, events or situations within an organization even when withholding that information might have a negative impact on some publics.			
Practitioners	2.5	6.5	.01
Journalists	3.0		

PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS HELD BY PR AND NON-PR MAJORS

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Running Head: PERCEPTIONS OF PR PRACTITIONERS

Abstract

This study deals with the changing image of the public relations (PR) practitioner. It was found that students now hold a positive image of this profession. Both PR and non-PR majors highly rate the PR practitioner in terms of potency, activity and positive evaluation. The PR majors rate the PR practitioner significantly higher than do the non-PR majors. These results were found by using the semantic-differential technique to survey 32 PR majors and 78 non-PR majors at Central Missouri State University.

Introduction

For a number of years the general public may have held a negative view of public relations (PR) as a profession. In *Managing Public Relations,* James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) said, "The (PR) profession has its roots in press agentry and propaganda, activities that society generally holds in low esteem" . They point out that the average person may assume, "Aha, . . . you're in the image-making business," or "It must be fun putting things over on people," or even "How can you justify taking advantage of people?" (p. 4).

On the other hand, recent changes in the marketplace suggest that the image of the PR practitioner is moving in a positive direction. Ralph Lowenstein, Dean of the the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications, maintained, "The profession of public relations has never had more dignity than it possesses today. Once confused with the word 'publicity,' it is now seen as a process that is a vital function of management" (Seitel, 1987, p. v). The image change to which Professor Lowenstein is referring may be due as much to an upgrading of the role and responsibilities of the public relations professional as to any other factor.

Otto Baskin and Craig Aronoff (1988) said in *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice* that "Public relations is a profession in transition" (p. xv). Edmund Midura (1988) suggested that the public relations practitioner must now be responsible for a wider range of duties, including: preparing media kits; working with printers, photographers, and vendors; preparing executives for media interviews; distributing materials to the media; and planning for and conducting press conferences (pp. 1-12). As PR practitioners are given expanded duties, the way in which they are perceived will change, both within and outside the organizations in which they work.

An important question for professors of PR is, "What is the current image held by students of the PR practitioner?" Specifically, how do PR majors view their chosen profession, and does their view differ significantly from that of non-PR majors? A search for articles and studies revealed that presently there is virtually no published information of this kind available. One study by Robert L. Bishop (1987) was found that only examines the job expectations of PR students. One dissertation was found (Forde, 1988) that examines "motivating factors and perceptions influencing selected students in the Southeast to major in Public Relations." This dissertation cites only students' anticipated tasks in future PR roles (such as relating with people and having a variety of creative work) rather than examine the attitudes students hold toward PR practitioners.

With over 200 PR majors—the state's largest such program—public relations is an important part of Central Missouri State University's Department of Communication. Students' attitudes toward this profession can affect both the enrollment of PR courses, as well as the nature of those classes. The need for information about C.M.S.U. students' attitude toward PR was considered important enough for the authors to conduct this research.

Previous research suggests there are significant differences between the numbers of men and women employed in PR, as well as between the roles they play. Dozier states that PR is a female-majority occupation in which women "play the *technician* role predominately, whereas men play the *manager* role predominately" (1988). This was first observed as early as 1982 (Broom), and was further substantiated by Toth and Cline in "Beyond the Velvet Ghetto" (1989). Although gender was not the primary purpose of this study, the authors of this study did examine their results in terms of gender.

Method

It was believed that PR majors have a more positive view of PR practitioners than do non-PR majors. A survey instrument that used Charles Osgood's semantic differential was developed to test this belief. The semantic differential is essentially a combination of controlled associations and scaling procedures (Osgood & Tannenbaum, p. 20). The semantic differntial was found by Osgood to be objective, reliable and valid in measuring attitudes in terms of three major dimensions: evaluation, potency, and action. As a result of extensive research at the University of Illinois in the 1960s, according to Em Griffin,

> Osgood discovered that all our feelings toward things can be plotted on three irreducible axes that cut through semantic space.... Most of (our) judgments could be classified as one of three types: an overall positive/negative evaluation, an assessment of potency, and a commentary on the degree of activity.... Less than 10% of the meaning Osgood can detect falls in categories other than these three clusters (pp.28-36).

The instrument designed to survey Central's students therefore included nine pairs of Osgood's "reciprocally antagonistic adjectives" that were cited by Griffin to measure these three categories. Strong vs. weak, hard vs. soft, and heavy vs. light were the pairs of words used to find potency; active vs. passive, fast vs. slow, and hot vs. cold were used to find activity; and good vs. bad, kind vs. cruel, and honest vs. dishonest were used to find positive/negative evaluation.

Further, it was decided to use Osgood's three dimensions to serve as anchors for the 35 other scales generated through preliminary interviewing and testing at Central.

Three hypotheses were developed:

1) PR majors will score PR practitioners as having significantly more potency than will non-PR majors.

2) PR majors will score PR practitioners as being significantly more active than will non-PR majors.

3) PR majors will score PR practitioners significantly more positively (evaluative) than will non-PR majors.

Three important intermediate steps were followed in the development of 35 additional pairs of bi-polar opposite words. First, graduate assistants in Central's Department of Communication were sent an open-ended questionnaire that asked the following three questions:

1. Please list any word or phrase that in your mind characterize the public relations practitioner.
2. What *positive* word(-s) do you think the public may associate with the P.R. practitioner?
3. What *negative* word(-s) do you think the public may associate with the P.R. practitioner?

Eight graduate students responded. The words given in response where matched to antonyms. Obscure and redundant words were deleted. (See appendix I for answers to these questions.) These pairs of adjectives were next placed in a questionnaire according to whether they expressed potency, activity or positive/negative evaluation.

The second step was to obtain responses to the questionnaire from three faculty members and to seek their suggestions for additional pairs of adjectives. This step was especially helpful in eliminating words which were ambiguous or of little value.

The last step was to pretest the revised survey instrument on 27 undergraduate students. Pairs of words were deleted that were unknown or unfamiliar to more than 5% of the students who evaluated the questionnaire.

The final questionnaire consisted of seven unnumbered points between each pair of words. Each student responded by how strongly he or she agreed with each of the bi-polar words. Subsequently, each response was given a score from one to seven, with the highest score being a seven and the median being a four. Within the questionnaire pairs of words were alternated so as to help reduce biased results. (See appendix II for complete survey instrument).

After final corrections were made, the questionnaire was given to students in six communication courses: three required of all PR majors, and three required for general education. Students indicated on the questionnaire whether or not they were (or intended to be) PR majors. The results from 32 PR majors, and 78 non-PR majors were processed with SAS (Statistical Analysis System). The mean was found for each student's responses to each of the 44 scales in the three pairs of words for each of the three categories of Osgood's semantic differential. Comparisons were made (using a t-test for significance) between the responses of PR majors and non-PR majors regarding potency, activity and positive/negative evaluation of PR practitioners.

Results

The survey was conducted in March, 1991. The results of this survey are statistically significant, and are described below under two subheadings.

A. The results of the nine pairs of Osgood's bi-polar adjectives.

The results below present only the data derived from the nine pairs of bi-polar adjectives originally generated by Osgood.

There were statistically significant differences in all three areas of potency, activity and positive/negative evaluation of PR practitioners.

1. Potency

$t(108) = 3.15, p<.05$

	Mean of Scores	Standard Error
PR Major	5.25	.14
Non-PR Major	4.66	.93

2. Activity

t(108) = 3.18, p<.05

	Mean of Scores	Standard Error
PR Major	5.60	.15
Non-PR Major	4.97	.11

3. Positive/negative evaluation

t(108) = 3.70, p<.05

	Mean of Scores	Standard Error
PR Major	5.24	.19
Non-PR Major	4.31	.14

B. The results of 35 specially generated pairs of bi-polar adjectives.

The following are data derived from the 35 bi-polar adjectives generated specifically for this survey.

The responses to these 35 pairs of adjectives showed that PR and non-PR majors agreed in many respects. For example, of the ten pairs of adjectives receiving the highest mean scores, seven were the same for both the PR majors and the non-PR majors. Those adjectives are the following: communicative, creative, enthusiastic, high-profile, energetic, assertive and active. (See appendices III and IV)

Although there were statistically significant differences between PR and non-PR majors' responses to 19 of the 44 pairs of words in the questionnaire, in all but four of these cases the differences were due to the PR majors more strongly agreeing with the positive words describing the PR practitioner, rather than the two groups selecting opposing words. (See appendix V)

It is noteworthy that the mean scores of responses to nearly all pairs of words were positive. The only pairs of words with scores below the mean of 4.00 are the following:

1. Responses from non-PR majors

Pair of words	Score
Hot (not cold)	3.95
Honest (not dishonest)	3.88
Unbiased (not biased)	3.29
Genuine (not fake)	3.82
Real (not artificial)	3.86

2. Responses from PR Majors

Pair of Words	Score
Cynical (not trusting)	3.72
Unbiased (not biased)	3.63

Responses came from 58 women and 52 men. Of the responding students, seven are freshmen, 30 are sophomores, 52 are juniors, and 22 are seniors.

Regarding gender, there were no significant differences between men's and women's perceptions of PR practitioners.

Discussion

The results above show how PR majors score the PR practitioner significantly higher in terms of potency, activity and positive evaluation than do the non-PR major. Three factors come to mind to which these results might be attributed. First, these results could indicate that Lowenstein, Baskin, and Aronoff are correct about the general improvement of the image of public relations, and that Central's PR majors simply reflect a larger trend.

Second, it also seems natural to expect students to view positively those professions—in whatever field—for which they are preparing to enter. And third, these results may be an example of attribution theory. If students are investing four years of their lives to enter a specific career, they are likely to attribute to that profession significantly greater value. Whatever the cause, PR majors clearly rate highly their future profession.

The unexpected result from this research is how positively the non-PR majors viewed PR practitioners. This appears to reconfirm our first point, that the PR profession has made pervasive gains toward a more positive public image.

Regarding gender, the authors believe, since there was no significant difference between men and women's perceptions, the present students may well bring a more egalitarian view to the PR workplace.

This preliminary study suggests the need for further research in two directions. First, the authors encourage other PR professors and researchers across the country to consider using this same survey instrument to conduct similar surveys at their institutions. The results could confirm a national trend, or reveal significant differences in students' views regarding the PR practitioner.

Second, the authors hope to conduct a subsequent survey of PR practitioners and their fellow employees, using the same semantic-differential scales.

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Appendix I

RESPONSES TO ORIGINAL OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

We would greatly appreciate it if you could take about five minutes right now to help us with a project we are working on. We would like to develop a questionnaire to survey our students' view of the public relations field. Please write your response to each of the questions below, and return this form to either of us by the end of Monday, Jan. 28.

1. Please list any word or phrase that in your mind characterizes the public relations practitioner.

a promoter of another's ideas
busy
communication
people oriented
conduit
corporate relations
creative
disgruntled customers
front image
Information specialist
informed
organizer
overworked
professional
promoter
propaganda
put on a good face
smooth
speaks for others
spokesperson
under-recognized
verbal

2. What positive word(-s) do you think the public may associate with the P.R. practitioner?

- busycatalyst
- concerned
- environmental
- awareness
- expert
- expressive
- fair
- glamorous job
- honest
- implementing social and outreach programs
- informed
- innovative
- interesting job
- knowledgeable
- professional
- promoter
- social responsibility
- travels a lot
- true
- work with interesting people

3. What negative word(-s) do you think the public may associate with the P.R. practitioner?

- biased
- company man
- con-artist
- corporate pawn
- cover-up
- facade
- faking a positive image
- fund-raiser
- glossy
- doublespeak
- huckster
- influence peddler
- manipulator
- not a real job
- putting up a front for corporation
- salesperson user
- slick
- smooth talker
- spin doctor
- subjective
- two-faced

Appendix II

A SURVEY OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS.

This is a survey designed to find out your feelings about people who work in the field of public relations.

Below are 44 pairs of opposing words, with a range of seven spaces between each pair. Between each pair of words please place an "X" in the space which most closely matches your view of people working in public relations.

The more one word matches your perception, the closer you should place your "X" to that word. If you are unsure of your feelings toward a pair of words, leave the space blank between those words.

1. Strong|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Weak Pot.

2. *Soft.*|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Hard*

3. Heavy.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Light

4. *Weak.*.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Powerful*

5. Cynical.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Trusting

6. *Bland.*|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Exciting*

7. Stimulating.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Dull

8. *Shallow.*.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Deep*

9. Independent|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Dependent

10. *Submissive.*|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Dominant*

11. Specialist.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Generalist Pot

12. *Passive.*|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....*Active* *Act.*

13. Fast.|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|.......|....Slow

14. *Cold*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Hot*

15. Energetic|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Lazy

16. *Regimented*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Creative*

17. Professional|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Amateurish

18. *Indifferent*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Enthusiastic*

19. Extroverted|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Introverted

20. *Quiet*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Loud*

21. Concerned|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Indifferent

22. *Inhibited*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Assertive*

23. Friendly.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Aloof

24. *Inarticulate*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Communicative*

25. People-oriented|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Task-oriented

26. *Low-profile*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*High-profile* *Act.*

27. Good|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|. Bad P/N

28. *Cruel*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Kind*

29. Honest|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Dishonest

30. *Pessimistic*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Optimistic*

31. Organized|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Disorganized

32. *Novice*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Expert*

33. Fair.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Unfair

34. *Ignorant*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Knowledgeable*

35. Socially Socially
Responsible|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Irresponsible

36. *Biased*.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Unbiased*

37. Honorable|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Dishonorable

38. *Unethical.*|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Ethical*

39. Genuine|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Fake

40. *Indecisive.*|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Decisive*

41. Sincere.|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Insincere

42. *Subjective.*|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Objective*

43. Open-minded|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....Closed-minded

44. *Artificial.*|........|........|........|........|........|........|........|....*Real.* P/N

In conclusion, please take a moment to answer these last three questions.

45. What year in school are you?
_____ 1. Freshman
_____ 2. Sophomore
_____ 3. Junior
_____ 4. Senior
_____ 5. Graduate student

46. Are you a public relations major?
_____ 1. Yes, I am (or I intend to become) a public relations major.
_____ 2. No, I am not a public relations major.

47. Are you a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)?
_____ 1. Yes, I am a member of PRSSA.
_____ 2. No, I am not a member.

48. What gender are you?
_____ 1. Female
_____ 2. Male

Appendix III

RANKED BY PR MAJOR RESPONSE

7.00 = Strongest possible agreement

4.00 = Median of possible responses

Mean response of PR Majors	Pairs of words responded to	Mean response of non-PR Majors
6.31	Communicative (not inarticulate)	6.21
6.16	Creative (not regimented)	5.40
6.00	Professional (not Amateurish)	5.37
5.97	Enthusiastic (not indifferent)	5.54
5.91	Active (not passive)	5.90
5.91	Friendly (not aloof)	5.00
5.86	Strong (not weak)	4.95
5.84	High-profile (not low-profile)	5.49
5.81	Energetic (not lazy)	5.73
5.78	Assertive (not inhibited)	5.65
5.78	People-oriented (not task oriented)	5.32
5.78	Fast (not slow)	5.05
5.78	Exciting (not bland)	4.82
5.72	Knowledgeable (not ignorant)	5.78
5.69	Decisive (not indecisive)	5.33

5.56	Powerful (not weak)	5.35
5.56	Stimulating (not dull)	4.64
5.50	Dominant (not submissive)	5.36
5.50	Concerned (not indifferent)	4.42
5.49	Socially Responsible (not socially irresponsible)	4.85

5.47	Good (not bad)	4.49
5.44	Organized (not disorganized	5.44
5.44	Extraverted (not introverted)	5.17
5.41	Expert (not a novice)	5.36
5.41	Kind (not cruel)	4.56
5.38	Loud (not quiet)	5.44
5.31	Hard (not soft)	4.96
5.28	Ethical (not unethical)	4.45
5.13	Open-minded (not closed-minded)	4.63
5.13	Hot (not cold)	3.95

5.09	Optimistic (not pessimistic)	5.01
5.09	Independent (not dependent)	4.73
5.09	Honorable (not dishonorable)	4.47
5.09	Objective (not subjective)	4.23
5.09	Fair (not unfair)	4.18
5.00	Real (not artificial)	3.86
4.94	Sincere (not insincere)	4.04

4.84	Honest (not dishonest)	3.88
4.80	Specialist (not a generalist)	4.58
4.69	Genuine (not fake)	3.82

4.56	Heavy (not light)	4.08
4.41	Deep (not shallow)	4.27
3.72	Cynical (not trusting)	4.21
3.63	Unbiased (not biased)	3.29

Appendix IV

RANKED BY NON-PR MAJOR RESPONSES

7.00 = Strongest possible agreement

4.00 = Median of possible responses

Mean response of PR Majors	Pairs of words responded to	Mean response of non-PR Majors
6.31	Communicative (not inarticulate)	6.21
5.91	Active (not passive)	5.90
5.72	Knowledgeable (not ignorant)	5.78
5.81	Energetic (not lazy)	5.73
5.78	Assertive (not inhibited)	5.65
5.97	Enthusiastic (not indifferent)	5.54
5.84	High-profile (not low-profile)	5.49
5.44	Organized (not disorganized	5.44
5.38	Loud (not quiet)	5.44
6.16	Creative (not regimented)	5.40
6.00	Professional (not Amateurish)	5.37
5.50	Dominant (not submissive)	5.36
5.41	Expert (not a novice)	5.36

5.56	Powerful (not weak)	5.35
5.69	Decisive (not indecisive)	5.33
5.78	People-oriented (not task oriented)	5.32
5.44	Extraverted (not introverted)	5.17
5.78	Fast (not slow)	5.05
5.09	Optimistic (not pessimistic)	5.01
5.91	Friendly (not aloof)	5.00

5.31	Hard (not soft)	4.96
5.86	Strong (not weak)	4.95
5.49	Socially Responsible (not socially irresponsible)	4.85
5.78	Exciting (not bland)	4.82
5.09	Independent (not dependent)	4.73
5.56	Stimulating (not dull)	4.64
5.13	Open-minded (not closed-minded)	4.63
4.80	Specialist (not a generalist)	4.58
5.41	Kind (not cruel)	4.56
5.47	Good (not bad)	4.49

5.09	Honorable (not dishonorable)	4.47
5.28	Ethical (not unethical)	4.45
5.50	Concerned (not indifferent)	4.42
4.41	Deep (not shallow)	4.27
5.09	Objective (not subjective)	4.23

3.72	Cynical (not trusting)	4.21
5.09	Fair (not unfair)	4.18
4.56	Heavy (not light)	4.08
4.94	Sincere (not insincere)	4.04
5.13	Hot (not cold)	3.95
4.84	Honest (not dishonest)	3.88
5.00	Real (not artificial)	3.86
4.69	Genuine (not fake)	3.82
3.63	Unbiased (not biased)	3.29

Appendix V

RANKED BY GREATEST DIFFERENCE IN STATISTICALLY DIFFERENT SCORES

7.00 = Strongest possible agreement

4.00 = Median of possible responses

Mean response of PR Majors	Pairs of words responded to	Mean response of non-PR Majors
6.16	Creative (not regimented)	5.40
6.00	Professional (not Amateurish)	5.37
5.91	Friendly (not aloof)	5.00
5.78	Fast (not slow)	5.05
5.86	Strong (not weak)	4.95
5.78	Exciting (not bland)	4.82
5.49	Socially Responsible (not socially irresponsible)	4.85
5.41	Kind (not cruel)	4.56
5.47	Good (not bad)	4.49
5.50	Concerned (not indifferent)	4.42

5.28	Ethical (not unethical)	4.45
5.09	Honorable (not dishonorable)	4.47
5.09	Objective (not subjective)	4.23
5.09	Fair (not unfair)	4.18
5.13	Hot (not cold)	3.95

4.94	Sincere (not insincere)	4.04
5.00	Real (not artificial)	3.86
4.84	Honest (not dishonest)	3.88
4.69	Genuine (not fake)	3.82

When Marketing Imperialism Matters:
An Examination of Marketing Imperialism at the Manager Level

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When Marketing Imperialism Matters:
An Examination of Marketing Imperialism at the Manager Level

Marketing imperialism is the intrusion of marketing into activities traditionally within the domain of public relations.1 Previous research examining the antecedents and consequences of marketing imperialism found that the professional affiliation and gender of the top public relations practitioner were factors antecedent to marketing imperialism.2 Findings also indicate that encroachment, defined as the assignment of non-public relations professionals to manage the public relations function, is a consequence of marketing imperialism.3 Still other research suggests that more than one type of marketing imperialism may exist. One study found that of all the departments sharing domains similar to public relations, including the legal, personnel, human resource development and marketing departments, only marketing imperialism leads to encroachment.4 None of the other departments translated imperialistic behavior into encroachment. That study concluded that the legal, personnel and human resources development departments may provide technical assistance to the public relations department, whereas marketing departments provide management.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether organizational variables, in addition to individual factors, are antecedent to marketing imperialism. This study considers resource dependence and domain similarity in particular. In addition, this study asks the question: "When does marketing imperialism matter?" Does one kind of imperialism lead to the official take over of the public relations function by marketing, while another kind does not?

Organizational Variables and Marketing Imperialism

Domain Similarity. Several marketing researchers have considered the effects of domain similarity on the marketing function. Domain similarity is defined as "the degree to which two different individuals or departments share the same goals, skills, or tasks."5 Previous research has examined the impact of domain similarity on the amount and quality of communication between individuals located in the marketing and other organizational departments.6 However, this research did not consider the power implications of this variable. Logic suggests the presence of domain similarity can also lead to the occurrence of marketing imperialism.

Theoretically, when two organizational functions are perceived by members of the organization as sharing similar goals, skills and tasks, one function can be considered to be substitutable for the other. Because public relations and marketing are perceived as similar, they are often believed to be appropriate substitutes for each other. According to Broom and Tucker,

> Public relations firms do 'marketing communication' and 'marketing public relations.' Advertising agencies and marketing departments offer 'public relations' services. The public relations function reports to marketing. Advertising agencies gobble up public relations firms. Little wonder that many CEOs in organizations large and small think the two functions are simply different techniques for achieving the same end.7

In addition, both functions use similar techniques including promotion, publicity and advertising.8 When public relations is considered to be a substitutable function, it is also thought of as a relatively powerless function. As Hickson et al. note in their strategic contingencies theory of intraorganizational power, one factor which gives an organizational function power is the provision of a nonsubstitutable service to the organization.[9] Nonsubstitutability is the ability of a department to provide skills, products or services that no other department can provide.[10]

Traditionally, marketing has been considered a nonsubstitutable function. Because marketing drives sales, and sales determine the economic survival of the organization, marketing has been perceived as the least substitutable organizational function. According to McDaniel, the "marketing mix determines the ultimate success of a product or service and even of a company."[11] This perception positions marketing as the more powerful function in the public relations-marketing relationship.

Evidence suggests that public relations practitioners, as well as those outside the field, consider public relations to be a highly substitutable function. Anyone can "do" public relations because it requires little formal education and common skills. Previous studies indicate that public relations practitioners are not professionally trained and possess no formal specialized skills. In a study of 216 public relations practitioners, Grunig found that while the average practitioner has some training in public relations, few have training beyond the bachelor's level.[12] A 1989 survey of International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) members found that only 44 percent hold a college degree. Of that group, only half received their degrees in journalism or communication/public relations.[13] Interviews conducted by Lindenmann and Lapetina indicate that top executives recognize this lack of training. According to these researchers, the executives interviewed believe that public relations professionals lack the educational background necessary to function as corporate leaders.[14] As a result of this lack of training, practitioners frequently perceive themselves and are perceived by others as fulfilling highly substitutable, technical roles. Such perceptions decrease the power of public relations as an organizational function and invite nonsubstitutable functions to overpower substitutable functions.

Theoretically, the movement of marketing into the public relations arena can occur at two levels: the technician level or the manager level. These levels mirror the public relations practitioner roles suggested by Dozier.15 According to Dozier, public relations practitioners assume one of two roles: the manager role or the technician role. Managers make policy decisions and are held accountable for public relations program outcomes. They view themselves and are viewed by others in the organization as public relations experts.16 Technicians, on the other hand, "carry out the low-level mechanics of generating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others."17

Thus, when imperialism occurs at the technical level, one department provides low-level administrative and production support for the other. Such technical imperialism does not encroach upon the unit or department receiving the assistance, nor does it undermine its survival as a separate entity. However, when imperialism occurs at the manager level, one department makes policy decisions and solves strategic problems for another. Imperialism at the manager level threatens the autonomy of the department receiving the assistance by taking over the decision making authority of that function.

When two functions are considered similar, and one function substitutable for another, the more powerful function is "encouraged" to overpower the less powerful function. Public relations "encourages" marketing to manage the public relations function by failing to manage the department. According to Ehling, practitioners "have been all to willing to fulfill the role of product publicist . . . a technically limited service."18 As a result, marketing provides decision making and problem solving assistance to public relations. The following hypothesis is suggested:

H1 As domain similarity between the public relations and marketing departments increases, the level of managerial marketing imperialism increases.

Resource Dependence. A related, but separate concept, is resource dependence, defined as the degree to which a member of one functional area must obtain resources from another area to accomplish his or her objectives.19 Prior research suggests that

> the more the members of one department perceive themselves to be dependent on the resources, information, or functional performance of another department in successfully carrying out their jobs, . . . the greater the influence of the department that holds the needed resources over the decisions and actions of the individual who is dependent on those resources.20

In other words, the more one department controls the resources of another, the greater the influence of the resource-rich department on the resource-poor department. Cutlip, Center and Broom suggest that not only does public relations compete with marketing for scarce resources, but also with the legal, personnel, and human resource development departments.21 Often, the public relations and marketing departments share such resources as publicity writers and desk-top publishing equipment. However, as marketing is traditionally the more powerful department, these resources are often located in the marketing department. Consequently, marketing managers make decisions for the public relations function, such as when and if resources will be available. Reliance on shared resources enables the resource-rich department to manage the resource-poor department. The following hypothesis is posited:

H2 As resource dependence between the public relations and marketing departments increases, the level of managerial marketing imperialism increases.

Arguably, resource dependence and domain similarity occur together in public relations departments. According to Ruekert and Walker, domain similarity and resource dependence occur together in marketing departments.

> Because marketing personnel do not have all of the monetary, informational, or human resources necessary to do their jobs, they must seek such resources from people in other functional areas. However, such exchanges of needed resources are likely to occur most frequently among people in departments operating within similar domains.22

Public relations practitioners also rely on other departments to contribute monetary, informational and human resources in order to accomplish its tasks. The public relations function is most likely to seek this support from departments sharing similar domains. The following hypothesis is suggested:

H3 A positive relationship exists between resource dependence and domain similarity.

As individuals in the more powerful department take over management activities usually performed by those in the less powerful department, those in the powerful department come to be known as the "experts" in performing these activities. Eventually, top management asks these experts to manage the less powerful department and encroachment occurs. This discussion suggests the following hypothesis:

H4 Managerial marketing imperialism is positively related to encroachment.

Methodology

Sample. To test these hypotheses, questionnaires were mailed to 500 public relations managers in the United States. A systematic sample of managers was chosen from O'Dwyer's Directory of Corporate Communications.23 An initial mailing was sent in September 1990 with two follow-up mailings, both in October 1990. Two hundred and sixty-two questionnaires were completed, a response rate of 52 percent.

Measurement. The indices used in this study were measures developed in previous research. Ruekert and Walker developed and successfully used the domain similarity and resource dependence scales.24 Lauzen developed the technical marketing imperialism, managerial marketing imperialism and encroachment indices from 16 depth interviews with public relations practitioners in the San Diego area.25 These interviews led to the design, selection, and modification of the questionnaire items.

Factor analyses using principal factors with iterations, rotated to a varimax solution, were conducted to construct indices for domain similarity, resource dependence, technical marketing imperialism, managerial marketing imperialism and encroachment. All of the indices are simple additive indices using items that posted high loadings on the relevant factors. For each index, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed. All reliabilities exceeded .50, the level generally considered sufficient for research purposes.

Domain Similarity. A 5-item index developed by Ruekert and Walker was used to measure domain similarity.26 The items in this index asked respondents to what extent the marketing and public relations departments in their organization obtain their funding from the same source, do the same kind of work, have the same clients or customers, have similar operating goals, and have employees with similar professional or trade skills. Factor analysis of these items yielded a single factor solution explaining 50 percent of the variance. The Cronbach reliability coefficient of the additive scale constructed from the factor items was .76.

Resource Dependence. A slightly altered 3-item index developed by Ruekert and Walker measured resource dependence.27 The original item developed by these researchers asked "For you to accomplish your goals and responsibilities, how much do you need the services, resources, or support from this other unit?" The current study broke this question into three separate items. The items in the altered index asked practitioners how much they need the services of the marketing department's specialists and/or expertise; equipment, materials and supplies provided by the marketing department; and the marketing department's support personnel to accomplish their public relations goals and responsibilities. Factor analysis of these items yielded a single factor solution explaining 76 percent of the variance. The Cronbach reliability coefficient of the additive index constructed from the factor items was .81.

Technical and Managerial Marketing Imperialism. The same seven-item index was used to measure technical and managerial marketing imperialism. This index asked respondents the degree to which the marketing department in their organization had increased, maintained or decreased its involvement in certain areas over the prior two year period. These areas included public affairs/lobbying, employee communication, media relations, community relations, fund-raising, promotions/publicity, and financial/shareholder relations. The instructions for each of the indices differed. For the technical marketing imperialism index, respondents were instructed to indicate the degree to which the marketing department in their organization had increased, maintained, or decreased its technical responsibilities over the last two years in the areas traditionally assumed by public relations practitioners For the managerial marketing imperialism index, respondents were instructed to indicate the degree to which the marketing department in their organization had increased, maintained, or decreased its managerial responsibilities over the last two years in the areas traditionally assumed by public relations practitioners. Factor analysis of the technician marketing imperialism index yielded a single factor solution explaining 67 percent of the variance. The Cronbach reliability coefficient of the additive index constructed from the factor items was .91. Factor analysis of the managerial marketing imperialism scale yielded a single factor solution explaining 70 percent of the variance. The Cronbach reliability coefficient for this scale was .93.

Encroachment. A three-item index was used to measure encroachment. This index asked practitioners how often top management hires, promotes or laterally moves individuals from some profession other than public relations to manage the public relations department. Factor analysis of this index produced a single factor solution explaining 80 percent of the variance. The Cronbach reliability coefficient of the additive index constructed from the factor items was .86.

Findings. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients confirm all hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 states that as domain similarity between the public relations and marketing departments increases, the level of managerial marketing imperialism increases. Pearson correlation analysis reveals that domain similarity and managerial marketing imperialism are positively related (r=+.29; p<.01).

Hypothesis 2 states as resource dependence between the public relations and marketing departments increases, the level of managerial marketing imperialism increases. Pearson correlations confirm this relationship (r=+. 34; p<.01).

Hypothesis 3 states that domain similarity and resource dependence will be positively related. The analysis confirms that a positive relationship exists between these two variables (r=+.44; p<.01).

Hypothesis 4 states managerial marketing imperialism is positively related to encroachment. Pearson correlational analysis reveals that marketing imperialism at the managerial level is positively related to encroachment (r=+.28; p<.01). It should also be noted that no significant relationship exists between marketing imperialism at the technical level and encroachment.

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings suggest that organizational variables, such as domain similarity and resource dependence, can be added to practitioner variables as antecedents to marketing imperialism at the manager level. It should be noted that although public relations and marketing are often perceived as sharing a similar domain, theoretically the two functions have different goals and are grounded in fundamentally different and distinct philosophies. These philosophies, in turn, are based on differing sets of presuppositions about the world. Normatively, public relations is based on building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.28 This approach reflects a world view that is fundamentally symmetrical. According to this perspective, the organization is just as likely to adapt or change as are publics. A practitioner holding this view makes the organization more responsive to the larger community and society in which it operates. In some cases, the practitioner advocates the public's point of view, sensitizing members of the dominant coalition to the legitimate concerns, values, and rights of those publics affected by the organization's policies, procedures and conduct.

On the other hand, marketing is "the development and efficient distribution of goods, services, ideas, issues, and concepts for chosen consumer segments."29 Marketing is implicitly rooted in an asymmetrical world view. Information is collected about consumers' needs and wants for the purpose of benefitting the organization's bottom line.

The different philosophies underlying these two organizational functions suggest that public relations and marketing are complimentary, yet distinct functions. Thus, it is to the organization's advantage to encourage these functions to operate separately for maximum effectiveness.

Findings also indicate that marketing imperialism "matters" when imperialism occurs at the manager level. When a marketing manager assumes public relations activities, the independence and integrity of the public relations function is jeopardized. The public relations function still exists in these organizations, but at a much diminished capacity. Public relations practiced as an asymmetrical function is less efficient at building mutually beneficial relationships. These marketing managers are unlikely to possess the skills necessary to negotiate with publics.

Future research should explore the theoretical implications of symmetry and asymmetry for public relations and marketing. For example, when public relations is practiced in an asymmetrical way, does public relations become more like marketing? Can the concept of symmetry be applied to marketing? What would symmetrical marketing "look like?"

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AEJMC Public Relations Division

The Truth About Lying: Public Relations Curricula Strengths

by

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The Truth About Lying: Public Relations Curricula Strengths

Is there any value in educating people specifically in public relations? The question seems pertinent in assessing content of course offerings in this young discipline. It is especially relevant in light of interdisciplinary tension, and the national academic debate over the juxtaposition of public relations to other areas of journalism education and practice (Grunig, 1988; Pavlik, 1987; AEJMC panels, 1989 in Washington, D.C.; and 1990 in Minneapolis). Failing to make the case that well-defined education in public relations has value, there is no need for it as a separate academic discipline.

This study looks at a major aspect of public relations practice, one that has received considerable criticism. Are those practitioners specifically educated in the discipline more truthful than those practitioners not trained in public relations? Given a public relations situation, is there a difference among practitioners' propensity to tell the truth, based on their education (Caudill, Ashdown & Caudill, 1990; Harrison, 1990; Ryan & Martinson, 1988)? In dealing with willingness to tell the truth and community commitment, the study offers quantitative survey data on public relations practitioners' demographic profile and new research with respect to lying and social interest.

Review of Literature

People talk about honesty and truth. Discussions are replete with teleological and deontological concepts espoused by realists, cognitivists, non-cognitivists and the like. The result is ethereal discourse without distinctions among the whole truth, half-truth, or no truth. If practical application about public relations and ethics is ever discussed, the conclusion is that the purpose of public relations is to distort truth, and practitioners are trained to lie (Deaver, 1990; Barney, 1990; Faith, 1988). Hence, lying is thought to be an important tool in solving public relations problems. Such a philosophy implicitly points to the callousness of individuals who practice public relations and the unprofessional nature of public relations as a group.

Claims that public relations practitioners do not lie would be false. They are human. A famous and beloved journalist aptly accused everybody of lying, "None of us could live with an habitual truth-teller; but thank goodness none of us has to" (Twain, 1928). He indicated that somehow, lying, the ubiquitous and beguiling alter-ego of honesty, is often ignored in thought and action. People lie to themselves and to others. But because the topic is taboo, lying is rarely discussed. Still, moral guidelines for positive social involvement exist, as do those that deal with lying.

Among the centuries-old moral condemnations of lying are: the Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not lie," the Code of Hammurabi, and Maimonides' Code of Law and Ethics which instructs "One must not say one thing and mean another, but like heart like face; we should express in words of mouth only what we have in mind" (Birnbaum, 1974).

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines a lie as "an untrue statement with intent to deceive." Bok used the term deception as the umbrella category under which lying is only one part. She said that with gestures, disguise, action, inaction or silence, "...people try to make others believe what we ourselves do not believe." Ekman (1985) added that a liar intends "...to mislead another, doing so deliberately, without prior notification of this purpose, and without having been explicitly asked to do so by the target." Two primary ways to lie are to conceal and to falsify. Goffman (1959) pointed to the continuum between truths and lies:

> ...in every day life it is usually possible for the performer to create intentionally almost any kind of false impression without putting himself in the indefensible position of having told a clear-cut lie. Communication techniques such as innuendo, strategic ambiguity, and crucial omissions allow the misinformer to profit from lies without, technically, telling any.

Being able to recognize a lie is essential, but not adequate to avoid its transmission. Individuals must also possess the desire for truth, a condition that requires consideration of others. The ability to identify perspectives besides one's own is a sign of moral maturity. Kohlberg's 1969 exposition on moral development drew heavily on Rawls' theory of justice. The latter was a higher abstraction of the social contract depicted by Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.

Kohlberg's explanation of moral stages removes logic from morality. He said that logic is a separate but essential function in moral decision making. Decision making begins with logical processing (at whatever level of sophistication) of information and ends with action determined by individual values acquired over a life-time.

Social Interest. Invoking logic, albeit useful, is crucial to knowing right from wrong. However, that knowledge alone will not cause a person to act correctly. Human feeling toward others is an important facet of truth-telling.

Caring behavior is based on feelings that psychologist Adler called *gemeinschaftsgefuhl*, a primary personality trait, translated as social interest. Adler maintained the importance of social interest over all desirable traits. It was his major criterion for mental health. He said the degree of a person's social interest comprises the person's main characteristic and directs all individual actions. In his 1929 Problems of Neurosis, Adler wrote:

> It is almost impossible to exaggerate the value of an increase in social feeling. The feeling of worth and value is heightened.... The individual feels at home in life and feels...worthwhile.... Not only the ethical nature, but the right attitude in aesthetics, the best understanding of the beautiful and the ugly, will always be founded upon the truest social feeling.

From Adler's concept, James Crandall (1975) created the Social Interest Index (SII), a measure of how much an individual strives to confront real problems and contribute to the welfare of the larger community. The SII, a value-oriented approach, was compared to: 1) Rokeach's Value Survey (including 18 variables — for example: peace, equality, family, security, pleasure, and exciting life); 2) Frankl's purpose in life; 3) Zuckerman & Lubin's multiple affect adjective checklist of hostility, anxiety, depression; and 4) Wrightman's philosophy of human nature: altruism and trustworthiness. Crandall concluded that empathetic understanding of others is intrinsic to social interest.

Sullivan (1965) suggested a related concept in his mutual values — moral and personal values based on rights that are granted because an individual is a human person. Examples of rights are life, freedom, food, and truthful information. The mutuality is expressed in the obligation of each human to respect the rights of others so as not to interfere with anyone's rights and to have one's own rights respected.

Reed, Shamir & Connell (1990) looked for the relationship of professional values with personal values, age and experience. They found a strong correlation between personal and professional ethics — a relationship that did not change over time regardless of age or experience. Again, Wright (1985) found public relations practitioners as a whole have moderate to high levels of conventional morality.

Turk (1987) detected significant differences in public relations managers' ranking of ethical issues, social responsibility considerations and technological developments. CEOs, educators and those at either end of the age continuum (24 years or younger; 55 years or older) were more likely to rate an understanding of ethical issues as important to successful public relations management. Those with both higher and lower titles were more concerned about social responsibility considerations.

Yet perceptions persist of public relation's manipulative behavior. Is it possible that public relations practitioners are Machiavellians in gray pinstripes? Is their only purpose to satisfy their own needs, or those of their clients, without regard for public welfare? Indeed, the multiplicity of lying and the complexity of social interest spawned the first hypothesis:

H_1: Practitioners with low social interest have a weaker tendency to truth-telling than practitioners with high social interest.

Academicians suggest that teaching ethical standards will have long-term effects in consciousness raising for students and practitioners (Schutz, 1988). Many scholars hold that ethics courses in school can augment the socialization process and increase truth-telling tendencies. Through exposure to different perspectives, case studies of conflict situations, and open discussions, students learn to appreciate the numerous facets of truth. Consequently, ethical standards are offered in college classes and professional workshops.

Christians & Covert (1980) made general recommendations to improve the teaching of journalism ethics. Their overall plan includes continuing education, networking among and between educators and practitioners, and an "interdisciplinary group to help shape course content, curriculum organization, teaching formats, teacher training, and relationships with practitioners." They said academicians need to contribute literature, theory and research in every phase to improve teaching. Also, descriptive research should be encouraged, and applied ethics research must at least begin to provide instructions for professional behavior."

Several teaching texts and techniques have already undergone review. Pratt & Rentner (1988) analyzed the type of ethics research selected for the *Body of Knowledge* and the ethics information in the *PRSA Accreditation Study Guide*. In combination, the two works stimulate inquiries, but do not build ethical theory. Pratt & Rentner stipulated the importance of training in ethical concepts, theories, models, and procedures for effective public relations practice.

Fact vs. Impression Accuracy. Culbertson (1973) refined research data from several areas to teach students to identify different perspectives. In attempting to foster independent thinking among students, he spotlighted concern for truth and non-partisan goals. Culbertson offered six concepts to promote ethical dialogue. He demonstrated how *wisdom* and its ethical implications are intrinsic to public relations practice. For example, factual knowledge was primary, but Culbertson stated "...the ability to recall facts is not a sufficient condition for wisdom." Although he noted doltish behavior of quiz-show winners with phenomenal rote-memory, he could easily have cited students or practitioners who fail to understand and synthesize information. The remaining five Culbertson concepts deal with decision making: 1) weighing and assessing arguments;

2) basing credibility on factors other than prominence and personality; 3) perception of one's own expertise; 4) fineness of discrimination; and 5) level of uncertainty about conclusions.

In 1983 Culbertson performed a content analysis of honesty and lying in public relations textbooks. He found that honesty was taken for granted, with no distinction made between dimensions of accuracy: Fact and Impression. He said Factual Accuracy is telling the truth by making *verifiable* statements, (e.g. logical reasoning or observable fact) but nothing else. Fact Accuracy, selecting data based on ambiguity or potential to mislead, is common practice. In business it is referred to as marketing, in news-editorial it is slanting, in public relations it is special pleading, in advertising it is persuasion, and in speech it is rhetoric.

On the other hand, Impression Accuracy is complex and difficult to achieve. Impression Accuracy is the entire truth, available and in context for the source, receiver, or everyone. Obviously, Impression Accuracy demands the *wisdom* to identify and sort appropriate environmental cues, and synthesize data for a beneficial, useful truth. Culbertson found little, if any, discussion about Impression Accuracy. Textbooks took an absolutist tone, adamant in presenting Factual Accuracy, and inadequately attending to "situation, problems and rationales." Treatments were vague, limited and unenlightening. He concluded that students are not suitably exposed to issues related to honesty.

These articles, added to a cornucopia of Culbertson research, may serve as a precursor to the re-examination of symbolic interaction studies that culminated in a concept called breadth of perspective — "the variety of responses one calls to mind before tackling a problem." An imaginative person able to solve problems is one who can envision many alternatives (Culbertson, 1989).

Public Relations vs. News-Ed. From social science research, it is clear that fact, a concept akin to truth, is multidimensional, insinuates countless perspectives, and hence, requires appropriate context. Public relations learning, ingrained from public relations-specific content, produces a broader knowledge base to deal with incongruous facts and encourages the use of research and evaluation (Ryan & Martinson, 1990; Judd, 1990; Piekos & Einsiedel, 1990). Other specialty areas in journalism, particularly news-editorial, take a more narrow view. Journalists tend to isolate themselves from their publics. News editorial practice and college courses are more likely to stress reporting, editing, technology, and design rather than involvement, communication, or interaction (VanLeuven & Ray, 1988; Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller & Atkin, 1987; Ferré, 1988; Singer, 1990; Bennett, Gressett & Haltom, 1985). The news-distribution model was born from the printing industry, has a practical bent, and can be self-serving politically and economically, despite common misperceptions that media are public utilities (Humphrey, 1987; Nord, 1986; Reilly, 1986; Sloan, 1988).

In the late 1940s, the Hutchins Commission pointed to the journalistic tradition of reporting news objectively — but out of context. Such complaints still prevail. Even though public relations practitioners may consider the context, aspects of their academic background pertaining to technical writing are similar to news-editorial majors. Both groups adhere to what is now the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 90-65 hour rule: 90 hours of classes must be outside journalism, with 65 of those 90 hours in the liberal arts. However, individual sequences in journalism (i.e. public relations, advertising, photography, etc.) differ critically in definition, purpose, and course-sequence subject matters.

A second hypothesis grew from anecdotal remarks that public relations information can never parallel news reporting fact, and from Deaver's 1990 interpretation of the truth continuum. Among practitioners who are either public relations or news editorial college majors, is there a difference in willingness to lie? Do news editorial graduates lack appropriate education in subjects that broaden individual views? Are public relations graduates subversively pleading their special interests? These questions lead to the following hypothesis:

H_2: Practitioners who majored in news-editorial have a weaker tendency to truth-telling than those who majored in public relations.

Whatever the training or educational emphasis, most groups want to enhance their professionalism. Gross & Robinson (1989) confirmed the re-evaluations of professional roles everywhere. "The last few years have witnessed considerable navel-gazing...[professionals are] struggling to define who they are and how they are distinct from the other sundry professional groups who claim to be engaged in similar practices."

Mass communication scholars join their colleagues in the investigation of professionalism. Black & Barney (1990) suggested journalistic "...standards of professionalism are the same as standards of behavior for morally mature peer groups that are mediated by publicity (i.e. information made public), not simply nominal, legal standards." The free speech presumption from which journalism was founded and continues to operates, precludes a standardized exam.

Ethics as professionalism. Beam (1990) considered the extent to which practitioners adhere to criteria dictated by professional norms (codes of ethics, statements of professional societies) rather than by employers or clients. He concluded that inter-occupational differences in professionalism "...suggests something about the relative success those occupations have had in securing the authority to create and direct the substance, performance, and goals of their work."

Mortensen, Smith & Cavanagh (1989) probed management's perception of the importance of ethical issues in their daily tasks, including planning, organizing, decision making, written communication skills, and interpersonal skills. Ethics was divided into codified, personal, activist, and ethical analysis. Results showed that managers did perceive ethics as important, with codified ethics rated most highly. Findings supported inclusion of ethics in manager training and development.

Management has undergone changes precipitated by many ordinary people in work situations enabling them to actuate personal values. Freeman & Gilbert (1988) refer to those management changes as a revolution. Those researchers contend that understanding will be achieved only by knowledge of ethics and its role in the organization. They offer guidance by stating two principles: 1) the value principle — all action is derived, in part from values; and 2) the interdependence principle — organizational success is due to choices and actions of people (stakeholder groups). "The first principle applies to those groups which the second principle says are important." To understand organizational choices, one must first thoroughly assess its individual members.

A frequent fallacy is the comparison of ethics between individuals in public relations to individuals in journalism. News editorial incorrectly functions as the model from which all journalism professionalism is evaluated (Kopenhaver, 1985; Theus, 1988). Public relations has too often suffered from that antagonistic perspective, and continues to deal with a stigma of unprofessionalism" (McBride, 1989). In public relations the term *professional* implies the ability to manage, organize, communicate, facilitate as well as the desire to attain equity among various publics. Practitioners routinely stimulate dialogues to raise consciousness and operating levels. A fundamental precept of public relations is that deceptive interaction — except game playing, comedy, and other deceptions "for effect" which is clearly labelled as such — undermines the integrity of the public trust.

To advance professionalism, PRSA established and maintains a national standardized examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). Qualifications to take the test include five years full-time experience in public relations. According to the accreditation study guide:

> The purpose of the accreditation program is to recognize those who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience, and professional judgment in the field. The program seeks to improve public relations practice. The designation Accredited in Public Relations (APR) signifies a high professional level of experience and competence.

Many practitioners whose educational background was outside public relations may first encounter public relations-specific ethical behavior via their study for the APR exam. An interest in achieving accreditation is associated with motivations for personal and professional enrichment (Sharpe, 1986; Jackson, 1988; VanLeuven, 1989).

Nonetheless, public relations is a young and growing profession. For several reasons, many practitioners have not achieved APR status. Does

APR designation make a difference in practitioner professionalism? Can non-APR practitioners deal as truthfully and effectively with conflict as APR practitioners? Does studying for the PRSA exam prepare practitioners to honestly cope with the maze of public relations' interactions? The third hypothesis grew from those questions.

H3: Practitioner tendency to truth-telling and status as Accredited in Public Relations will correlate, although the direction is not clear.

Method

The purpose of the study was to examine the value of veracity among public relations practitioners, by determining their commitment to the community and their willingness to share truthful information. A pre-test was conducted the first week in May, 1990, at a local Public Relations Society of America chapter meeting. To provide consistency with the planned national sample, respondents were confined to full-time, active public relations practitioners. A few weeks later, a random sample of 616 active United States practitioners was drawn from the *1989-90 Public Relations Society of America National Directory* for a mail survey. The four-page instrument, introductory letter and stamped, self-addressed return envelope were mailed twice over five weeks in May and June. Results were derived from 376 coded responses for a 61% response rate.

Questionnaire

The measurement instrument totalled four pages, created by desk-top publishing for reading ease and friendly appearance. The instrument was an amalgamation of pre-existing scales and new vignettes.

Independent variables

1) The Social Interest Index (SII) — measures an individual's sense of ethics or social interest in the well-being of the larger community.

Crandall said the scale measures a person's "interest in the interests of mankind," reflecting the degree of positive attitude toward others. From a list (Anderson, 1968) providing mean ratings of general desirability for each trait, Crandall selected and rated 90 personality traits of varying degrees of relevance for social interest. Those ratings were used to form 48 pairs of traits and the final result was a 15-item scale.

SII scores are derived by subject selection of one word in each pair from 15 pairs, with nine buffer items. Scores range from zero to 15, then means are determined. Low scores equate with low social interest.

2) demographics — eight of the 11 questions from the *Public Relations Journal* annual salary survey provided respondent profiles: age, sex, amount of education, organization's primary activity, area of public relations, years of experience in public relations, accreditation, and college major (The key independent variable included subjects with undergraduate educational backgrounds in: news-editorial - 25%; history, foreign language, political science, or philosophy - 20%; English - 18%; public relations - 13%; communication, speech or theatre - 11%; business - 9%; broadcasting - 3%; advertising - 2%. A total of 41% majored in the four journalism areas).

Dependent Measures:

1) three vignettes — Original scenarios designed for public relations practitioners were created to differentiate between the decision to tell a big lie, a little lie, or the truth. Each scenario described an incident common to public relations experience.

Vignette options indicate a tendency to truth-telling based on an ordinal scale with scores of: 1 = big lie, 2 = small lie, and 3 = truth. These vignettes are regarded as being prima facie valid (Ryan, 1986; Jaksa &

Pritchard, 1988). The limited options sometimes constrained practitioners from offering other solutions. However, they also represent a natural progression from lie to truth, allowing practitioners to indicate what they would do in routine responsibilities or crisis situations.

For example, Vignette 1: In preparing a news release on repair to the new basketball coliseum, the boss already rejects your first version. The direct order is to delete data that repairs were initiated by a leak in the dome roof that inconvenienced 2,000 fans during the first game. Vignette options in re-writing were: 1) lie by avoidance, omitting the topic; 2) reduce the significance by burying the roof leak at the end of the article; or 3) tell the truth in context, refusing to lie, and perhaps quit the job.

Vignette 2: At a news conference to discuss an explosion in your company's plant, you as the vice president of public relations explained effectiveness of your crisis plan. No injuries resulted and damage was contained. One reporter asked "Where is your CEO?" The CEO took "vacation leave" for a three-week alcohol abuse detoxification program. The practitioner could: 1) lie, saying that the CEO was on vacation; 2) state factually correct data that the CEO was in the hospital, but not say why; or 3) tell the whole truth in context.

Finally, Vignette 3: As a public relations manager at a private hospital, you are called by a TV network affiliate and asked if a local philanthropist is being treated. By corporate policy, names of high-profile patients are not added to the computer admissions list to maintain secrecy. Choices of responses were: 1) lie by giving the policy response — that name is not on our patient list; 2) provide fact accuracy data by saying you are not allowed to divulge that data; or

3) tell the truth, saying the person is a patient.

4) Fact versus Impression Accuracy dimension — five direct questions measured on a six-point agree-disagree scale helped validate the vignettes by further tapping an individual's willingness to tell the entire truth with information in context (Impression Accuracy), or disclosing part of the truth as a statement of the facts (Fact Accuracy). Following are questions asked and the ideas behind each:

A. If answering a question that I know would embarrass my organization, I would reveal only enough of the facts to keep my organization's reputation unblemished.

This is an Impression Accuracy statement. Agreement with this question means the practitioner is concerned with protecting the organization's credibility, and is willing to disclose enough factual data to keep the hounds at bay.

B. If answering a question that I knew would embarrass my organization, I would provide as much information as possible, explaining exactly why my organization did what it did.

This is neither Fact nor Impression Accuracy, but a bold statement of truth in the highest order. Agreement reveals the practitioner's willingness to tell all of the factual information and place it in context so that any recipient can clearly understand the explicit and implicit information and ramifications.

C. If answering a question that I knew would rightfully place blame on my boss or myself, resulting in one of us being fired, I would be willing to provide information even if I suspected it might be inaccurate.

This is a Fact Accuracy statement. Agreement indicates a willingness to deceive or misrepresent factual, verifiable information in order to survive — by preventing damage to self or an associate.

D. If answering a question in a volatile situation that might lead to a strike, I would provide accurate facts, but be sure the overall impression I gave would lead to a peaceful and positive solution.

This is an Impression Accuracy statement. Agreement means the practitioner will provide contextual data by telling the truth but will make sure that the overall impression is a certain way. Hence, the practitioner is willing to tell an impression lie.

E. If answering a question that could impede the rescue of a hostage taken in my organization's building, I would have no problem making statements that were not factual.

This is a Fact Accuracy statement. Agreement with this statement means the practitioner is willing to lie about verifiable information. This response indicates truth-telling is not mandatory if human life is at risk.

5) Veracity Scale — The three vignettes and five accuracy statements were tested for inter-correlations, then for association with one another to assess internal validity.

Vignette intercorrelations were tested with Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient, r_s . All three were positively correlated ($r_s = .11$ or greater; $p < .05$; no table shown). Fact and Impression Accuracy statement intercorrelation showed seven of the 10 as statistically significant ($r_s = .10$ or greater; $p < .05$, no table shown).

The tendency for truth-telling as measured by the vignettes was combined with the Fact versus Impression Accuracy statements to create a new scale called Veracity with the lowest value 11 and the highest value 48. The mean value for the scale was 25.64 with a standard deviation of 4.6.

Findings

Table 1 provides a profile of practitioner survey respondents. The average practitioner is a male, at least 45 years old, who has between five and 15 years experience in public relations. He is presently in a public relations consulting firm. The average practitioner is not likely to have achieved APR status, but has a baccalaureate with a major in English, communication or journalism, most probably in a news-editorial sequence. He probably has several graduate courses to his credit. Not shown in this table are, in rank order, the top six areas of his responsibility: media relations, special events, public affairs, publicity, corporate communication, community communication, and marketing.

Table 2 depicts the findings for the three hypotheses.

H_1: Practitioners with low SII scores have a weaker tendency to truth-telling than practitioners with high scores.

Having information about a situation scarcely insures truth-telling. A person must have strong social feelings. Veracity scale scores, the eight-item index measuring tendency to tell the truth, were compared with the Social Interest Index. A Pearson product moment correlation indicated a positive and significant statistical correlation of .10, $p < .05$ between social interest and tendency to truth-telling. Practitioners who also performed poorly on the SII, also failed to achieve high Veracity scores. Practitioners with low SII scores are more willing to lie than those with high scores.

H_2: Practitioners who majored in news-editorial have a weaker tendency to truth-telling than those who majored in public relations.

Historically, news-editorial journalists hold little respect for those in public relations (Jeffers, 1977; Kopenhaver, Martinson & Ryan,1984; Cline & Motes, 1982). Yet, many public relations practitioners began their careers at newspapers or in broadcasting. Further, discussions with educators indicated news-editorial graduates lack the informational scope afforded those with an array of public relations subjects to broaden understanding of human interaction. Public relations curriculum emphasizes social science theories and research concepts that may affect minor areas of non-professional classes. Educational background and value comparison within an occupational group is important to discern differences.

Results show there was a statistically significant difference between public relations majors and news-editorial majors. News-editorial majors earned a lower VERACITY score (24.9) than public relations majors (26.7). In fact, the mean score for news-editorial majors was below the *overall* mean (25.64) of the Veracity scale.

H_3: Practitioner tendency to truth-telling and status as Accredited in Public Relations will correlate, although the direction is not clear.

Academicians bemoan the APR exam, a document that is not grounded in theory. However, it is a stringent test requiring rigorous preparation. Clearly, if there were no differences between APR and non-APR practitioners, exam structure and content would require immediate re-evaluation.

Practitioners having achieved APR had a VERACITY mean score of 26.7. Non-accredited practitioners had a VERACITY mean score of 25.1. The difference in scores is statistically significant at $p < .001$, depicting APR practitioners as having a stronger tendency for truth-telling than non-APR practitioners.

As reflected in the table, mean scores on the SII scale registered no difference between APR and non-APR practitioners. While interest in the community registered about same for all practitioners, predictiveness in VERACITY showed APR practitioners less willing to lie. Non-APR practitioners are equally interested in the community, but they lack sufficient knowledge about how to ethically cope with the environment. The use of logic or critical thinking may play a part. But, the emphasis on public relations ethics training through both college major and APR may be the most influential discriminator of telling the truth in the specific public relations situations tested.

Findings show the largest percentage of practitioners in this sample were neither trained in public relations nor prepared for public relations through their own professional education by accreditation in the profession. Evidence points to college training in specific public relations sequences and a broad range of social science courses that result in a honed sense of social interest and honesty.

Public relations has no official proprietorship on education in ethics. However, there seems to be a heightened tendency for truth-telling for those who either evidenced early interest in public relations as a career through choice of study in public relations in a formal academic environment (e.g. case studies, principles, codes of ethics), or have achieved accreditation in public relations.

Conclusions

Generally, choices of individual practitioners are grounded on the broader background supplemented by specific experience in public relations. A dilemma occurs when the person with little or no public relations educational background is confronted with a crisis. Few professionals have been exposed to the body of knowledge in public relations for adequate preparation in applying abstract concepts to specific incidents.

Despite the high level of education among public relations professionals, their college majors are not quite suitable, and most PRSA members are not APR. They lack the formal academic benefits of a public relations curriculum. For example, a large percentage of practitioners were schooled in the journalism tradition of objectivity. This narrow view places truth: 1) out of context, 2) at the mercy of editing, and 3) constrained by the mechanism of new technology and design.

Public relations courses tend to encompass learning theories, role-playing, role-taking, case studies, open discussions, and writing. This eclectic body of knowledge produces a breadth of perspective that leads to increased tendency toward truth in public relations practice. Appropriate course content or practical subject matter should raise student and practitioner sensitivity to social responsibility, provide prescriptions for impartial, rational behavior in diverse situations, and advance professionalism.

Future Research

Subsequent research should provide similar surveys to compare public relations with occupational groups such as: advertising, news-editorial, law, business, social work, medicine, government (including armed services), police, etc.

Table 1

Sample Demographics of PRSA Veracity National Survey 1990

	Veracity Survey (n=351)
Male	54%
Female	46
Median age entire sample:	45.0
male age	48.3
female age	41.1
Years in public relations (median):	13.7
1-4	6.3
5-9	22.6
10-14	24.0
15-19	16.9
20-plus	30.3
Accredited in public relations	35%
Non-accredited	65
Educational level:	
some college	4%
college degree	42
some graduate work	27
graduate degree	27
College major:	
business	9%
communication, speech, or theater	11
English	18
journalism:	
advertising	2
broadcast	3
news-editorial	23
public relations	13
other	20

Table 2

Social Interest Scale, Veracity Scale Differences by Demographics

	SII Scale Mean (1=low)	F	p	Veracity Scale Mean (1=lie)	F	p
Education:						
some college (n=14)	7.7			24.7		
college degree (n=147)	7.7	.37	>.05	25.3	1.29	>.05
some grad work (n=94)	8.0			26.4		
graduate degree (n=95)	8.0			25.7		
Journalism major:						
Advertising (n=8)	6.6			27.4		
Broadcast (n=12)	8.5	.21	>.05	25.8	1.93	>.05
News-editorial (n=84)	7.6			24.9[a]		
Public relations (n=45)	8.4			26.7		
Accredited (n=120)	7.9	.03	>.05	26.7	10.48	<.001
Non-accredited (n=227)	7.9			25.1		
Years in public relations:						
1-4 (n=22)	6.8			25.4		
5-9 (n=79)	7.8			25.7		
10-14 (n=84)	8.1	.89	>.05	25.9	.29	>.05
15-19 (n=59)	7.8			25.1		
20-plus (n=106)	7.9			25.8		
Male (n=188)	8.1	2.68	>.05	26.1	4.44	<.05
Female (n=163)	7.6			25.1		

[a] a statistically significant difference in veracity scores was found between majors in news-editorial and those in public relations; $p < .05$; news-editorial majors were less truthful than public relations majors

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The Truth About Lying: Public Relations Curricula Strengths

by

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This study, a national random sample, links tendency to truth-telling and social interest with educational background. Findings show that among *public relations practitioners:*

1) discriminator variables for lying are college major and Accredited in Public Relations; 2) news-editorial majors have a weaker tendency for truth-telling than public relations majors; 3) low social interest scorers have a weaker tendency for truth-telling than high scorers; 4) non-APR practitioners have a weaker tendency for truth-telling than APR practitioners.

The Value of Veracity in Public Relations

by

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The Value of Veracity in Public Relations

When people talk about public relations ethics, they focus on specifics or abstractions at least once removed from themselves. It is safer to luxuriate in last week's replay than direct attention to this week's activity. Hamilton (1986) said such ineffectual debates resolve nothing. Leaping into the practical foray, this study examines the relationship between public relations practitioners' willingness to lie with the kind of lies they will tell and their background and interest in the welfare of the community.

People know when they lie or when they have been lied to. But few dwell on lying, because the topic is taboo. To deal rationally with truth and lying, Sullivan (1965a) suggested *mutual values* — a concept of moral and personal values based on rights that are granted because an individual is a human person. Example of rights include life, freedom, food, and truthful information. The mutuality is expressed in the obligation of each human to respect the rights of others so as not to interfere with anyone's rights as well as having one's own rights respected. Sullivan (1965b) wrote that images as reflections of reality are what public relations is about. Those mediated images, are not innately pernicious, but are information carriers.

> ...public relations has not realized its...obligations to the whole truth. The whole image process is its responsibility...one major objective of public relations must be to deliver truth about an institution....truth is hard to come by.

Indeed, one difficulty is discerning, then personifying truth in overt behavior. In a dynamic society meanings change rapidly as they are perceived by individuals or groups. Intrigued by the truth conundrum, Culbertson (1973) re-examined and built on social science research to spotlight non-partisan goals (Sullivan, 1965a) [concern for truth, not special pleadings] and to foster independent thinking. Culbertson offered six more concepts to promote ethical dialogue and non-partisan goals. He said *wisdom* and its ethical implications are inherent to public relations practice. Factual knowledge is salient to his constructs, but he said "...the ability to recall facts is not a sufficient condition for wisdom." Culbertson noted doltish behavior of quiz-show winners having phenomenal rote-memory, but he could easily have cited students or practitioners who fail to understand and synthesize information. Culbertson's five other concepts deal in decision making: 1) weighing and assessing arguments; 2) basing credibility on factors besides prominence and personality; 3) perception of one's own expertise; 4) fineness of discrimination; and 5) the level of uncertainty about conclusions.

Several of Culbertson's works herald symbolic interaction studies on breadth of perspective — "the variety of responses that one calls to mind before tackling a problem." A person scoring high in this concept is imaginative and able to solve problems by envisioning many alternatives (Culbertson, 1989).

Regardless of any visionary capability, people arrive at conclusions about the meaning of life in general or situations in particular that guide their behavior (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum,1975; and McGervey, 1986). Whichever moral theory or principles are presumed, practitioners, educators and students concede that ethics is integral to public relations professionalism, and a major element of ethics is lying.

Concepts and Definitions

Lying

One of the first scholarly explications of misrepresentation came from Goffman (1959, p. 62) who perceptively pointed to the continuum between lies and truths:

> ...in everyday life it is usually possible for the performer to create intentionally almost any kind of false impression without putting himself in the indefensible position of having told a clear-cut lie. Communication techniques such as innuendo, strategic ambiguity, and crucial omissions allow the misinformer to profit from lies without, technically, telling any.

Bok (1978) used the term deception as the umbrella category under which lying is only one part. She explained that with gestures, disguise, action, inaction or silence, people try to make others believe "...what we ourselves do not believe." Her definition of a lie is "...any intentionally deceptive message which is stated." According to Bok, a statement is usually written or verbal but can be transmitted via sign language, smoke signals, etc. Her intention was to cut through the horde of screens and get at the real lie, when the liar is not entangled in self-deception and recognizes that the liar's own communication is intended to mislead others. Ekman supported Bok's definition and added that a liar intends "...to mislead another, doing so deliberately, without prior notification of this purpose, and without having been explicitly asked to do so by the target. There are two primary ways to lie: to conceal and to falsify."

Siegler (1966) said a lie occurs when a person, in an attempt to deceive the listener, says what the speaker knows is false. He singled out six features to a typical case of lying: 1) say something; 2) intend to deceive; 3) say something false; 4) say something you know is false; 5) believe that what you say is false; and 6) communicate. Siegler said the ancient philosophers Augustine and Aquinas agreed "...falsity of what is said is not a necessary condition for lying," but did not distinguish between lying and telling a lie — i.e. communicating truth while simultaneously lying.

There are endless varieties of lies, for example: self-lies, life lies, white lies, the big lie, ambiguities, jokes, riddles, understatements, secrets, literature, mental reservations, exaggerations, mistakes, contradictions, circular declarations, and context deviations. Although *lie* is pejorative parlance, lying can be beneficial.

Martin (1986), unraveling the enigma of self-deception, said self-deceivers are both victimizer and victim. Yet, self-deception per se is not always bad. Failure to recognize information could stem from involuntary strategies such as: love, greed, ambition, fear, self-esteem, and hope. To accept information a person must: "1) understand the data; 2) be willing to attend to it in explicit consciousness; 3) believe it; 4) have a disposition to use it in reasoning (if relevant); 5) undergo emotional and attitudinal responses to what it expresses, as appropriate given one's personality; and 6) have at least some disposition to express it in actions made appropriate by one's desires, beliefs, and basic commitments."

Successful self-deception forces individuals to 1) blur what they know; 2) systematically distract themselves; 3) purposefully remain ignorant or rationalize; 4) discount cogent arguments by dismissing evidence, relevant facts or simply refusing to allow oneself to see clearly what follows from what; 5) remain emotionally detached; and 6) escape by pretending. Self-deception directly relates to poor decision making per Simon (1955) and Janis & Mann (1977) inquiries into rationality and criteria for choice (e.g. identifying, examining, differentiating and evaluating all alternatives), and Grunig's 1976 information system theory (i.e. decision making depends on recognizing environmental problems or change).

Secrets kept from oneself differ from those concealed from others. Bok (1984) devoted a volume to secrets, divulging countless characteristics exhibited by government, business and academic professionals, social groups and individuals. The difference between lying and secrets rests in the basic presumption that lying is morally incorrect with every instance requiring justification. Secrets can exacerbate "every form of abuse," but are not presumed wrong.

Eck (1970) presented quantitative results on how lies are judged: 1) slander is the most hated lie; 2) lying to avoid punishment is almost universally forgiven, 3) adults severely judge others, but tolerate a lie told by themselves; 4) no one likes being caught at lying, but on such occasions people consider the lie more of a bad faith situation than lying; 5) lying to protect a person is judged similarly for one's self or another person; 6) lies and deceitful behavior that foster personal success are not only overlooked, but thought to be clever or amusing; 7) adults lie as much as children, but often forget this is true; and 8) children almost always regard lying as immoral, but accept it as protection and a way to live in peace. "All of this implies educative consequences, the most important of which is the necessity of a positive rather than a negative education."

Shibles (1985) discussed characteristics and consequences of lying. He cited Aesop's fable of the shepherd boy and the wolf as an example of the benefits and harm in lies. Further, he denied Carr's contention of business operating under its own code. Shibles asked, "Would this mean that every institution of society would also have an ethics of its own?"

In 1983 Culbertson's content analysis of honesty and lying in public relations textbooks found that honesty was taken for granted. Distinction was not made between the two dimensions of accuracy: Impression and Fact. According to Culbertson, Factual Accuracy is telling the truth by making *verifiable* statements, (weight measurement, logical reasoning, or any observable fact) but nothing else. Factual Accuracy in business is referred to as marketing, in news-editorial it's called slanting, in public relations it's special pleading, in advertising it's persuasion, and in speech it's rhetoric — selecting data based on ambiguity or potential to mislead.

On the other hand, Impression Accuracy is complex and difficult to achieve. The accuracy and completeness of the data is determined by the definitions of well-informed, highly credible people who hold diverse viewpoints. Of course, this combination makes the concept inherently subjective and dependent on majority opinion. But, public relations is about consensus building. With this sophisticated posture, Impression Accuracy furnishes an overall depiction of truth that is potentially available to the source, receiver, or everyone (i.e. the entire truth, including pertinent facts in context). Impression Accuracy demands the *wisdom* to identify and sort appropriate environmental cues, and synthesize data for a beneficial, useful truth.

Culbertson found little, if any, discussion about Impression Accuracy. Textbooks took an absolutist tone, adamant in presenting Factual Accuracy, and inadequately attending to "situation, problems and rationales." Treatments were vague, limited and unenlightening. He concluded that students are not suitably exposed to issues related to honesty.

Whether discussing theory versus practice or classroom to office, it is clear that lying is nestled in ethics. With the strength of the literature behind it, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* provides a concise and tenable definition of a lie:

> **1** :to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive
> **2** :to create a false or misleading impression

Social Interest

Because public relations practitioners often are accused of merely "liking people," one might conclude that they, as a group, are interested in the welfare of their organization and the community. Ansbacher (1968) said those feelings are explained by psychologist Alfred Adler's concept, *gemeinschaftsgefuhl*, a primary personality trait, translated as social interest, sometimes social feeling.

Adler maintained the importance of social interest over all desirable traits. It was, in fact, his main criterion for mental health. Ansbacher pointed to Adler's definition of *useful* social interest, the critical differences in conduct, "By useful I mean in the interests of mankind generally." Adler said the degree of a person's social interest comprises the person's main characteristic and directs all individual actions. In his 1929 Problems of Neurosis, Adler wrote:

> It is almost impossible to exaggerate the value of an increase in social feeling....The feeling of worth and value is heightened....The individual feels at home in life and feels his existence to be worthwhile just so far as he is useful to others and is overcoming common, instead of private, feelings of inferiority.

Richardson & Guignon (1988) referred to social interest (SI) as "...an experience of individual wholeness based on a sense of inner connectedness and continuity with the rest of humankind, past, present, and future." They agreed with earlier researchers that social interest requires nurturing and directly affects behavior. Adler and disciples held that overt behavior is the critical test of social interest. They quoted Adler:

> What has happened to those people who have contributed nothing to the general welfare? The answer is: They have disappeared completely.

According to these researchers, Adler rejected the notion of society as neutral ground where people interact competitively or contractually to further their control and private satisfaction. Baseline social reality inherently consists of people and institutions cooperating and sharing an understanding of life. Of course, tensions arise from human imperfection and deficiencies. Mead (1967) wrote that moral behavior is "...intelligent, socially directed action in which one acts with the interests of others as well as one's own self in mind," with "maximum dynamic harmony" as a goal.

James Crandall accepted the concept of social interest as a striving toward addressing *actual* problems and contributing to others, perhaps even to the entire universe. He studied the relation of social interest to an affirmative, optimistic attitude toward life in general. From Adler's *gemeinschaftsgefuhl,* Crandall (1975) created the Social Interest Index (SII), a measure of how much an individual strives to confront real problems and contribute to the welfare of the larger community.

Professionalism: News-Editorial vs. Public Relations

Public relations is not alone in renewed group consciousness and self-study. This healthy view to achieve or improve professional status is manifested within ranks of numerous occupations. However, a few mass communication scholars with a background in news-editorial journalism (Black & Deaver, 1990; Barney, 1990) contend that public relations can never achieve a total ethical stance parallel to journalistic "news." They maintain the purpose of public relations is a type of persuasion akin to propaganda.

Public relations scholars recognize this hypothesis as consigning public relations practice to an asymmetrical model, with press-agentry at the center. Decrees to vitiate public relations as peddlers are neither new, nor laughable. Jeffers (1977), looking at performance expectations and status, found that journalists perceived public relations practitioners as unequal in status to themselves and lacking credibility, except for those practitioners with whom journalists personally worked!

Belz, Talbott, & Starck (1988) examined the sharing of values and the tensions in the relationships of public relations practitioners and news-editorial journalists. Belz, et.al. explored that relationship based on perceptions of each occupational specialty, concentrating on rights, duties, skills and personal characteristics. Results confirmed Jeffers' earlier. They showed that the two groups differed in perceptions of public relations roles, but agreed on the roles of journalists. Belz et. al. suggested that journalists who turn to public relations encounter two major problems:
1) They are victims of interrole conflict due to their switch to public relations and their perceptions about the role of public relations; and
2) Public relations practitioners suffer from intrarole conflict from the myriad expectations of their various and numerous audiences. Hence, even with a highly developed interest in the well-being of others, the journalists' increased low self-esteem and insufficient education and

professional experience wreak havoc in the decision making process, particularly during times of stress.

Gender

One mitigating aspect relative to truth-telling, social interest and professionalism is gender. Gilligan (1982) focused on differences in male and females relationship images of responsibility feelings in conflict situations. All respondents concerned themselves with avoiding hurt to others, but females viewed situations by their personal connections. Females responded contextually and depended on circumstances and alternatives. They behaved according to their connection *with* people and extending care and actions, not restrictions. The male perspective was one of separation.

Males saw constraints — not doing something for themselves so as to help others. In terms of protecting relationships, males felt fewer obligations. They may abide by rules but seem to depict relationships as dispensable. Feinberg (1966) explained that perspective with his correlation of legal rights with duties of respect to other people in abstentions and non-interference. Those rights, referred to by the law profession as *in rem*, hold not against a particular individual but against the world.

Those findings are philosophically portrayed by Tiryakian (1962). He posited that every person has a double existence, body (physical) and soul (social). The interests of the whole do not always coincide with those of the parts. "To obey the requirements of the soul (social), we have to engage in self-sacrifices, going counter to our biological inclinations. Society can only exist by a continuous process of abnegation on the part of the individual."

Despite extensive data on male views, Gilligan's findings reflect that females safeguard associations. Her concept, *the ethics of care*, is one of several to link relationships to responsibility, including adherence to truth. Social interest is associated with obligations to act ethically toward others. Rather than replacing relationships, females tried to change the rules. Gilligan concluded:

> In view of the evidence that women perceive and construe social reality differently from men.....And because women's sense of integrity appears to be entwined with an ethic of care, so that to see themselves as women is to see themselves in a relationship of connection, the major transitions in women's lives would seem to involve changes in the understanding and activities of care.

Griffiths & Whitford (1988) agreed with Gilligan. They said that people regarding themselves separated from others have never been principally responsible for the care of children or the elderly. "This position, actual or potential for all women, leads to a version of the self that is more likely to be *defined in relationship...*" Also, Crandall & Kytonen (1980) examined sex, age and stress as moderators for the relation between social interest and well-being. They found that social interest was significantly related to well-being and adjustment, with development at earlier ages in females than in males. Crandall & Putnam (1980) studied social interest's relations to different measures (cognitive versus affective). Results in their sample of employed adults indicated social interest is significantly correlated with several global measures of well-being.

Gender differences were also noted by Hanz & Wright (1985). Student and practitioner respondents completed the Berkowitz-Lutterman SRS Scale, measuring the orientation toward helping without a perceived reward. Hanz & Wright found that female students indicated stronger feelings of "doing one's best, keeping promises to friends, the need to associate oneself with others, and the worth of volunteering." These respondents displayed a social tendency.

These researchers regarded *social* as human structuring of action and thought, via role-taking — reacting to others as if they are similar and reacting to the self from the others' point of view. The role-taking aspect in moral judgment is grounded in sympathy for the welfare of others. This notion is akin to Adler's social interest and Sullivan's loving people unconditionally (not in sexual or spiritual senses) without expecting or demanding reward.

The Role of Ethics

Turk (1989) replicated the 1987 studies of managers in mass media industries by Poynter Institute of Media Management and the Media Management of Economics Resource Center at the University of Minnesota. These studies examined opinions and perceptions of how important managerial skills and orientations are for the success of an organization and of the specialists working in those organizations.

Turk's national mail survey found significant differences in public relations practitioners' ranking of ethical issues, social responsibility considerations, and technological developments. CEOs (chairman or president), educators and those at either end of the age continuum (24 years or younger; 55 years or older) were more likely to rate an understanding of ethical issues as important to successful public relations management. Those with both higher and lower titles were more concerned about social responsibility considerations. In fact, an "understanding of ethical issues and social consideration — rated as important by a majority — was singled out as lacking in newly promoted managers by fewer than one in five respondents. Upper level managers expressed greatest concern about new manager deficiencies regarding social responsibility. Practitioners without much experience in public relations focused on a lack of understanding of strategic planning and equal employment opportunity requirements.

Cline & Motes (1982) surveyed public relations teachers, and analyzed nine textbooks and three books of selected readings to determine the extent of student exposure to the role of public relations "flack" as a dealer of half-truths. They revealed two major student concerns: 1) relationships with employers or clients; and 2) deliberate distortion of information. Those findings concurred with Culbertson. Textbooks offer ambiguous data, especially about the relationship of public relations and advertising, persuasion and public relations goals and purposes. Four texts mentioned functions and duties of public relations. Two referred to the professional organization or correctly identified the concept of accreditation. Texts specified public relations trends as professionalism and increased reliance on research and communication tools. In general, the books treated public relations as analogous with an ancient and ill-reputed service profession. Indeed, practitioners were icons of pushy, deceptive "flacks" who used numerous communication techniques to control media content.

Harrison (1989) attempted to ascertain the role of ethics in the college curriculum. He surveyed 183 schools listed in the Public Relations Society of America publication *Where to Study Public Relations*, and verified the cursory ethical content in textbooks. Most of that content specifically bears on journalism and "...reflects a newsroom bias." Overall, he found a dearth of ethics courses available, despite the lip-service given the subject. Harrison concluded the revival is already in progress, but requires teachers who recognize ethics issues and understand ethics theory.

A five-year longitudinal project of ethical principles considered by students, middle managers, and executives (Lewis, 1989) examined decision-making guidelines in making moral choices. There were 14 most common principles of ethical conduct noted, including: Kant's categorical imperative, Golden Rule, and Carr's conventionalist ethic. Lewis detected differences between 1) executives and middle managers (executives are more likely to bluff and take advantage of legal opportunities); 2) executives and students (students are more likely to believe in trusting their intuition and believing in prayer); and 3) middle managers and students (middle managers are more likely to believe what is right and just for them is whatever is just and right for any other person in a similar situation).

Additionally, sequence patterns in moral decision making emerged: 1) role-taking from the others' perspective; 2) determine the virtuous response expected; and 3) ask how it would feel if the decision were publicized and whether the decision is consistent with organizational goals; and finally 4) act {a} right and just for any other person in a similar situation, and {b} good for the organization. There was high agreement against making decisions grounded in: 1) motivation of selfish gains or selfish actions; 2) bluffs or lies; 3) sole dependence on principles easily explained to a peer group; and 4) undue advantage of a situation, even if law or social practices permit.

Lewis called for systematic analysis and ethical application. He said that decision-makers can apply some standards without further thought or research. "Almost reflexively individuals know what to do," but, Lewis emphasized that gray areas, those "dilemmas not reducible to common methods of analysis," scream for concrete, practical procedures.

Ethics, lying not withstanding, extends beyond appropriate use of facts. While lying is one aspect of ethics, it is critical to communication. Public relations is rooted in generating or coordinating and distributing information. The degree to which practitioners respect the rights of others and contribute to the general welfare while acting at the behest of a client or organization denotes levels of moral development, personal integrity and professional maturity.

Hypotheses

H_1: A truth-telling tendency will differ according to sex, but the direction is unspecified.

Everybody lies sometime. Although holding different positions from men, women experience equal stress to get the job done. Women are privy to limited information, fewer resources and generally no more than moderate power. But, they are held just as accountable as men, in some situations, for responsibilities requiring additional authority and budgets. Frequently, they have fewer years and less variety of experience and fail to develop skills to help identify the possible choices. However, we know that women will try to change the rules to fit the people in the situation, rather than lie. To a smaller degree, men suffer the same inequities and frustrations in dealing within an organization. Experience may have shown that full disclosure is difficult, costly and perhaps embarrassing. Telling the truth can be difficult. Lying is easier and faster, but (with other factors held constant) women will have a higher tendency to truth-telling than men.

H_2: Practitioner tendency for truth-telling and status as Accredited in Public Relations (APR) will correlate, although the direction is not clear.

Practitioners may take the exam only after the requisite five years full-time experience in public relations. Achieving a particular type of education or assignment to specific public relations roles is not required. The examination is not grounded in communication theory and does not adequately treat ethics. However, practitioners are supposed to know and agree with the professional code of ethics. For testing, the code, along with other material, demands memorization, not logic and synthesis. Weeks after the test, data in short memory disappears. Ethics is not data for quick regurgitation, but for long-term integration. Accreditation does not seem to reflect breadth of study, maturation and social interest needed to avoid lying. Still preparing for the test is a form of becoming educated in public relations principles.

H_3: Public relations practitioners who majored in news-editorial have a lesser tendency for truth-telling than public relations majors.

News-editorial journalists usually are inadequately prepared for public relations, not having been trained in specific public relations courses aimed to increase breadth of perspective. News-editorial journalists do not respect public relations as a profession. Already socialized from newsroom interaction, when journalists make a career change to public relations, they experience interrole conflict, feelings of inferiority — possibly believing themselves to have regressed, not progressed.

Additionally, they must deal with the same intrarole conflict (pressures of multiple publics) as practitioners educated in public relations. Journalists raised on news distribution are forced into tough decision-making situations requiring managerial communication expertise, rather than technician publicity skills.

Discussions with other educators indicated news-editorial graduates lack a background in public relations education to broaden understanding of human behavior. It is up to the public relations curriculum sequence — not the news-editorial sequence — to emphasize research that may affect minor areas of non-professional classes.

H_4: Social interest scores will differ according to sex, but the direction is unspecified.

Early research in moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), criticized not for theory but methodology, totally ignored females. Later, inclusive studies, some mentioned above, indicated that females are more nurturing than males. However, female representation in many male dominated roles remains moderate to insignificant. Hence, females lack both role models and experience in certain work environments. Further, definitive gender research in this area has yet to emerge.

Nonetheless, the uniquely female vantage point of actual or potential caring lends itself to an intense knowledge about acceptance of people. Since females regard people as more important than rules, they more often facilitate relationships rather than denigrate others. Probably in positions with less power than men, the modus operandi of women is one of cooperation and nurturing which was learned from interactions with people possessing no power.

H_5: Public relations practitioners with low social interest scores have a weaker tendency to truth-telling than practitioners with high scores.

Low-SI practitioners do not recognize their personal connection to all humankind, more likely to attend to specifics. They are not professionals, and lack appropriate values and skills to improve themselves and advance public welfare. Although those with low scores *may* mean no harm, they are less empathetic and socially mature than higher scorers. Naturally, everyone experiences feelings of inferiority, but low scorers might suffer more frequently from low self-esteem. They dispense their responsibilities under the premise that the ends justify the means. They contemplate fewer alternatives and realizable higher goals. Hence, with a perception of fewer choices they often fall back on the path of least resistance, lying.

Method

The purpose of the study was to examine the value of veracity among public relations practitioners by determining their commitment to the community and their willingness to share truthful information. A pre-test was conducted the first week in May, 1990, at a local meeting of the Public Relations Society of America. For consistency with the planned national sample, respondents were confined to full-time, active public relations practitioners. A few weeks later, a random sample of 616 active United States practitioners was drawn from the *1989-90 Public Relations Society of America National Directory* for a mail survey. The four-page instrument, introductory letter and stamped, self-addressed return envelope were mailed twice over five weeks in May and June. Results were derived from 376 coded responses for a 61% response rate.

Questionnaire

The measurement instrument totalled four pages, created by desk-top publishing for reading ease and friendly appearance. The instrument was an amalgamation of pre-existing scales and new vignettes.

Independent variables

1) The Social Interest Index (SII) — measures an individual's sense of ethics or social interest in the well-being of the larger community.

Crandall said the scale measures a person's "interest in the interests of mankind," reflecting the degree of positive attitude toward others. From a list (Anderson, 1968) providing mean ratings of general desirability for each trait, Crandall selected and rated 90 personality traits of varying degrees of relevance for social interest. Those ratings were used to form 48 pairs of traits and the final result was a 15-item scale. SII scores are derived by subject selection of one word in each pair from 15 pairs, with nine buffer items. Scores range from zero to 15, then means are determined. Low scores equate with low social interest.

2) demographics — eight of the 11 questions in the *Public Relations Journal* annual salary survey provided respondent profiles: age, sex, amount of education, organization's primary activity, area of public relations, years of experience in public relations, accreditation, and college major. This last independent variable included subjects with undergraduate educational backgrounds in: news-editorial - 25%; history, foreign language, political science, or philosophy - 20%; English - 18%; public relations - 13%; communication, speech or theatre - 11%; business - 9%; broadcasting - 3%; advertising - 2%. Total journalism majors = 41%.

Dependent Measures:

1) three vignettes — Original scenarios designed for public relations practitioners were created to differentiate between the decision to tell a big lie, a little lie, or the truth. Each of the three scenarios described an incident common to public relations experience.

Vignette options indicate a tendency to truth-telling based on an ordinal scale with scores of: 1 = big lie, 2 = small lie, and 3 = truth. These vignettes are regarded as being prima facie valid (Ryan, 1986; Jaksa & Pritchard, 1988). The limited options sometimes constrained practitioners from offering other solutions. However, they also represent a natural progression from lie to truth, allowing practitioners to indicate what they would do in three routine responsibilities or crisis situations. For example:

Vignette 1: In preparing a news release on repair to the new basketball coliseum, the boss already rejects your first version. The direct order is to delete data that repairs were initiated by a leak in the dome roof that inconvenienced 2,000 fans during the first game. Vignette options in re-writing were: 1) lie by avoidance, omitting the topic; 2) reduce the significance by burying the roof leak at the end of the article; or 3) tell the truth in context, refusing to lie, and perhaps quit the job.

Vignette 2: At a news conference to discuss an explosion in your company's plant, you as the vice president of public relations explained effectiveness of your crisis plan. No injuries resulted and damage was contained. One reporter asked "Where is your CEO?" The CEO took "vacation leave" for a three-week alcohol abuse detoxification program. The practitioner could: 1) lie, saying that the CEO was on vacation; 2) state factually correct data that the CEO was in the hospital, but not say why; or 3) tell the whole truth in context.

Vignette 3: As a public relations manager at a private hospital, you are called by a TV network affiliate and asked if a local philanthropist is being treated. By corporate policy, names of high-profile patients are not added to the computer admissions list to maintain secrecy. Choices of responses were: 1) lie by giving the policy response — that name is not on our patient list; 2) provide fact accuracy data by saying you are not allowed to divulge that data; or 3) tell the truth, saying the person is a patient.

4) Fact versus Impression Accuracy dimension — five direct questions measured on a six-point agree-disagree scale helped validate the

vignettes by further tapping an individual's willingness to tell the entire truth with information in context (Impression Accuracy), or disclosing part of the truth as a statement of the facts (Fact Accuracy). Following are questions asked and the ideas behind each:

A. If answering a question that I know would embarrass my organization, I would reveal only enough of the facts to keep my organization's reputation unblemished.

This is an Impression Accuracy statement. Agreement with this question means the practitioner is concerned with protecting the organization's credibility, and is willing to disclose enough factual data to keep the hounds at bay.

B. If answering a question that I knew would embarrass my organization, I would provide as much information as possible, explaining exactly why my organization did what it did.

This is neither Fact nor Impression Accuracy, but a bold statement of truth in the highest order. Agreement reveals the practitioner's willingness to tell all of the factual information and place it in context so that any recipient can clearly understand the explicit and implicit information and ramifications.

C. If answering a question that I knew would rightfully place blame on my boss or myself, resulting in one of us being fired, I would be willing to provide information even if I suspected it might be inaccurate.

This is a Fact Accuracy statement. Agreement indicates a willingness to deceive or misrepresent factual, verifiable information in order to survive — by preventing damage to self or an associate.

D. If answering a question in a volatile situation that might lead to a strike, I would provide accurate facts, but be sure the overall impression I gave would lead to a peaceful and positive solution.

This is an Impression Accuracy statement. Agreement means the practitioner will provide contextual data by telling the truth but will make sure that the overall impression is a certain way. Hence, the practitioner is willing to tell an impression lie.

E. If answering a question that could impede the rescue of a hostage taken in my organization's building, I would have no problem making statements that were not factual.

This is a Fact Accuracy statement. Agreement with this statement means the practitioner is willing to lie about verifiable information. This response indicates truth-telling is not mandatory if human life is at risk.

5) Veracity Scale — The three vignettes and five accuracy statements were tested for inter-correlations, then for association with one another to assess internal validity.

Vignette intercorrelations were tested with Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient, r_S . All three were positively correlated ($r_S = .11$ or greater; $p < .05$; no table shown). Fact and Impression Accuracy statement intercorrelation showed seven of the 10 as statistically significant ($r_S = .10$ or greater; $p < .05$, no table shown).

Table 1 illustrates Fact and Impression Accuracy by Vignette Responses (ANOVA). Also, the table indicates Kendall's Tau association of Fact and Impression Accuracy. The tendency for truth-telling as measured by the vignettes was combined with the Fact versus Impression Accuracy statements to create a new scale called Veracity with the lowest value 11 and the highest value 48. The mean value for the scale was 25.64 with a standard deviation of 4.6.

Findings

The study focused on three discriminators (variables indicating direction) of social interest and lying: college major (PR and News-Editorial only), APR, and sex. Age, though not a discriminator, is a consideration pertinent to all three factors.

Table 2 displays Chi Square tests of percentage differences in nominal categories, and ANOVA tests of age and sex differences compared to other demographics. Statistical significances are revealed — APR versus non-APR, education, and years in public relations. Men are shown as 61% of all APR practitioners. The average age for men is almost 48. Women, 39% of APR practitioners, at an average age of 44 were younger and less experienced than their male counterparts.

The oldest practitioners generally did not graduate college. However, there were only 14 people in that category. The youngest practitioners, about the age of 43, earned four-year college degrees. Their slightly older colleagues, at age 45, had earned some graduate school hours, and people with at least one graduate degree had an average age of 46. Age and education demographics correlated at a statistically significant level with older practitioners more likely to have completed some graduate work. The same holds true for APR status. However, accreditation results were no surprise. Men are likely to be older, more experienced, better educated, have more years in public relations, and qualify for the APR test. They are also likely to be part of the dominant coalition and achieve APR status. There is a logical successful progression achieved by longevity in the field.

College major and age were not significantly related. The mean age for practitioners in news-editorial is 45.7, advertising is 42.4, broadcast age is 42.3, and public relations is 41.8. However, men tend both to be older and to have majored in news-editorial. Cross-tabulating organizational activity with age netted statistical significance: older practitioners work at advertising agencies (48.5 years), in educational institutions (48.5 years), public relations consulting firms (48 years) and in scientific and technical areas (48.8 years). Younger practitioners are in healthcare (39.9 years), religious, charitable institutions (37.6 years), and transportation-hotel-resort-entertainment (36.5 years).

The Veracity Scale validated previous research on the impact of education on knowledge and value foundations. Differences in mean scores between practitioners who are APR and non-APR were significant, as were those between men and women. In both cases the former (men and APR) tended to lie less. From these findings, both hypotheses one and two are accepted.

Although Veracity scores did not differ overall across educational levels, there were substantial differences between the 24.7 Veracity score of practitioners with some college and 26.4 of practitioners with some graduate work. In terms of college major, advertising majors did well on the Veracity Scale, indicating a willingness to tell the truth. However, the small number of advertising respondents make those findings suspect.

There clearly was a statistical significance between the Veracity Scale scores of news-editorial majors and public relations majors. With $p < .05$, news-editorial majors tended less to truth-telling than public relations majors. Therefore, hypothesis three was accepted.

Table 3 compares the Veracity Scale with the SII by Demographics. In terms of the SII scores, news-editorial majors scored lower than public relations majors. Advertising majors did poorly on the SII, despite their excellent performance on the Veracity Scale. There is a positive trend toward social interest and level of education. Yet, no relationship exists between social interests of APR and non-APR practitioners. In short, most practitioners indicated a commitment to the welfare of the community, but non-APR practitioners, as indicated on the Veracity Scale, seemed unable to affect behavior consistent with high social interest values.

A Pearson product moment correlation of SII scores with Veracity Scale scores indicate a positive and significant statistical correlation between social interest and tendency to truth-telling (.10, $p < .05$; no table shown). Practitioners who failed to achieve high scores on Veracity did not fare well on social interest. Therefore, practitioners with a low social interest are more likely to lie than those who scored high on social interest. Hypothesis four is accepted.

Finally, the fifth hypothesis is rejected. As seen in Table 3, men scored higher than women on the SII and Veracity scales. However, the analysis of variance showed SII mean scores for women reached 7.6, and men at 8.1. While scores differ, they are not statistically significant.

Conclusions

To insure the value veracity, the focus ought to be on the decision making process — derived from principles, not right answers. Teaching ethics and decision making is strategic to elevate standards in society for a richer civilization in concept and reality.

Lying is not peculiar to public relations. People revert to the most familiar data, rather than following a scientific cognitive procedure, i.e. logical thinking. Generally, choices are grounded on a broad background supplemented by specific experience. Dilemmas occur when a person without public relations education is faced with a public relations crisis. Few professionals have been sufficiently exposed to the public relations *Body of Knowledge* for preparation in applying abstract concepts to specific incidents. Routine and crisis decisions are made hurriedly, unthinkingly, unscientifically. And, ultimately, chaotic short-term procedure leads to short-sighted resolutions.

However, people often are comfortable with their choices based on what they know to be good, despite inability to scratch below surface logic. Women tend less to truth-telling than men, but women are younger, have fewer years of education and professional experience, have not achieved APR status, and prefer to change the rules not the relationships. Their naiveté may have lead them, in this survey, to tell the truth about lying. In tandem, that may explain why women scored lower than men on the Veracity Scale.

Practitioners as a group are older, but could be wiser. Despite high education levels, their college majors are not suitable for public relations. They lack the advantages of formal academic public relations curricula. Introduction to appropriate course content or practical subject matter should raise student and practitioner sensitivity to social responsibility and provide prescriptions for impartial, rational behavior in diverse situations.

Resolving issues and problems practically is preferable to exacerbating them with elongated, erudite platitudes impossible to make concrete. With tangible help in academic and professional educational standards, public relations can facilitate professionalism. Broad, pertinent academic curricula encourage logical, critical thinking, and development of breadth of perspective. Case studies in ethics and decision making should be integral to teaching. Socratic methods will enable student-practitioner to listen, think, speak, and read.

Professionalism in public relations can be strengthened by integrating the *Body of Knowledge* in the accreditation process. Such requirements attempt to define the academic literature and maintain knowledge leading to accreditation and on-going professionalism. The goal is to imbue professionals with learning power.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study was designed to launch additional projects for occupational comparison of veracity among professionals in various areas, for example: accounting, law, media, and government.

Debates on the appropriate academic place of public relations — journalism or business — stimulate studies about journalists and business. A comparison may contribute to the demise of misconceptions about: 1) journalistic objectivity and the place of news information on a truth continuum; 2) public relations practitioners' low ethicality in comparison to other occupations; and 3) purpose of business and public relations to profit by control and persuasion.

Fact versus Impression Accuracy requires further consideration. However, Fact Accuracy was not always adequately related to the tendency to truth-telling as measured by the three vignettes. The differences between Fact and Impression Accuracy must be re-evaluated along with the particular questions used in this study.

Table 1

Fact and Impression Accuracy by Vignette Responses (ANOVA)

				<—Tau[a]—>				
	Two-Item Fact Accuracy (low = lie)	n	F	p	Two-Item Impression Accuracy (low=lie)	n	F	p
Vignette 1 - Coliseum								
big lie	8.7	(49)			4.1	(50)		
little lie	8.7	(238)	.34	>.05	4.7	(245)	5.92	<.01
truth	9.0	(45)			5.5	(47)		
Vignette 2 - Explosion								
big lie	8.8	(246)			4.4	(253)		
little lie	8.8	(81)	1.52	>.05	5.5	(82)	9.72	<.001
truth	7.6	(11)			5.5	(12)		
Vignette 3 - Hospital								
big lie	8.8	(168)			4.3	(174)		
little lie	8.8	(158)	.02	>.05	5.2	(162)	8.21	<.001
truth	8.9	(8)			4.9	(8)		

[a] Kendall's Tau is the association between Fact and Impression Accuracy; Tau=.10; p < .01; (n=338)

Table 2

Sex and Age Relationships to Other Demographic Variables

	Male (n=187)	Female (n=161)	X^2	p	Age	F	p
Accredited (n=188)	61%	39%			47.7		
Not accredited (n=162)	50%	50%	3.86	<.05	43.7	10.73	<.01
Educational level:							
some college (n=14)	36%	64%			56.4		
college degree (n=147)	52%	48%			43.1		
some grad work (n=92)	57%	43%	2.76	<.05	45.1	7.24	<.001
graduate degree (n=95)	56%	44%			46.1		
Years in public relations:							
1-4 (n=22)	36%	64%			33.0		
5-9 (n=78)	44%	56%			36.0		
10-14 (n=84)	37%	63%	40.95	<.001	43.1	95.62	<.001
15-19 (n=59)	51%	49%			45.0		
20-plus (n=104)	78%	22%			55.8		
Mean age	48.1	41.4	(F) 35.27	<.001	--		

Table 3

Social Interest Scale, Veracity Scale Differences by Demographics

	SII Scale Mean (1=low)	F	p	Veracity Scale Mean (1=lie)	F	p
Education:						
some college (n=14)	7.7			24.7		
college degree (n=147)	7.7	.37	>.05	25.3	1.29	>.05
some grad work (n=94)	8.0			26.4		
graduate degree (n=95)	8.0			25.7		
Journalism major:						
Advertising (n=8)	6.6			27.4		
Broadcast (n=12)	8.51	.21	>.05	25.8	1.93	>.05
News-editorial (n=84)	7.6			24.9[a]		
Public relations (n=45)	8.4			26.7		
Accredited (n=120)	7.9	.03	>.05	26.7	10.48	<.001
Non-accredited (n=227)	7.9			25.1		
Years in public relations:						
1-4 (n=22)	6.8			25.4		
5-9 (n=79)	7.8			25.7		
10-14 (n=84)	8.1	.89	>.05	25.9	.29	>.05
15-19 (n=59)	7.8			25.1		
20-plus (n=106)	7.9			25.8		
Male (n=188)	8.1	2.68	>.05	26.1	4.44	<.05
Female (n=163)	7.6			25.1		

[a] a statistically significant difference in veracity scores was found between majors in news-editorial and those in public relations; $p < .05$; news-editorial majors were less truthful than public relations majors

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The Value of Veracity in Public Relations

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The study, drawing on a national random sample of active PRSA members, focused on discriminators of social interest and lying: college major (PR and News-Editorial only), APR, and sex. Age, though not a discriminator, is relevant to all three. Findings showed that those willing to share truthful information tended to be public relations majors, APR practitioners, men, and those with a strong social interest.